2025
AFRICA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science-and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind, and the African Union's Agenda 2063

African Union

ECA

BANQUE AFRICAINE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND
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Foreword

Escalating conflicts, constrained fiscal space and rising debt burdens, projected steep declines in Official Development Assistance (ODA), intensifying geopolitical tensions and a growing retreat from multilateralism are testing the resilience of countries everywhere. For Africa, 2025 is a year of urgency: only five years remain to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the 2030 Agenda. At the same time, the continent is embarking on the rollout of the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan of the African Union's Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want.

This latest edition of the Africa Sustainable Development Report (ASDR) measures the progress made in Africa across five selected SDGs and their related Agenda 2063 targets, in line with the SDGs under the purview of the High-Level Political Forum. The findings reveal a continent of immense potential but uneven progress. For instance, the continent had ten of the top 20 fastest-growing economies in the world in 2024, but labour productivity remains low. Moreover, whereas infant mortality has been declining and the number of births attended by skilled attendants has been rising, Africa still accounts for 55 percent of global infant mortality. Today, the need for sustainable, inclusive and quantifiable solutions—grounded in science—and for new streams of development financing to support development has become more critical than ever.

In line with the Kampala Declaration, an outcome of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD) held in Uganda in April 2025, the report puts forward a number of bold, actionable recommendations. It calls for deeper South-South cooperation at a time of fractured global solidarity, and renewed investment in Africa's youth, skills, and education systems. It also emphasizes the importance of strengthening financing and partnerships to achieve sustainable consumption and production, alongside a rigorous review of national plans in areas with catalytic impact—such as infrastructure, science, technology and innovation, digitalization, food systems, renewable energy, value added manufacturing and climate action. The report also pinpoints key entry points in which the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) can boost regional and global trade, as well as ensure economic integration. To deliver on the ambition of both Agendas, governments must also invest in robust data systems, strengthen institutions for sound economic governance, and foster a culture of mutual accountability at all levels. New measures to reduce corruption and enhance financial management will also be critical to unlocking Africa's full development potential.

This ASDR is a product of close collaboration between the African Development Bank, the African Union Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)—a testament to our shared commitment to Africa's sustainable future. Beyond serving as a snapshot of progress, this report is a call to recalibrate, refocus and reinvigorate action. With the 2030 Agenda approaching its midpoint deadline and the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 now under way, the imperative is clear: the actions taken today will shape Africa's development trajectory for decades to come. This report is not only a record of where we stand—it sets out clear areas for action and serves as a catalyst for the bold, inclusive and sustained action that the moment demands.

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf
Chairperson
African Union
Commission

Claver Gatete
Executive Secretary
United Nations Economic
Commission for Africa

Akinwumi A. Adesina
President
African Development
Bank

Haoliang Xu
Acting Administrator
United Nations
Development Programme

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Preparation of the report was coordinated by a core team led by Oyebanke Abejirin, Officer-in-Charge, Development Planning Section, ECA Macroeconomics, Finance and Governance Division; Farzana Sharmin, Economic Affairs Officer, Development Planning Section, ECA Macroeconomics and Governance Division; Charles Wangadya, Acting Head of Planning, AUC Monitoring and Evaluation Division; Balgis Osman-Elasha, Chief and Specialist, PECG; and Jacob Assa, Senior Economist and Strategic Adviser, Strategy, Analysis and Research Team, UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa.

Chapters of the report were drafted by the following lead authors: Oyebanke Abejirin and Farzana Sharmin, ECA (Chapter 1 – Introduction); Alex Warren-Rodríguez, Bruno Avila-Aravena, Joyce Makuei and Jacob Assa, UNDP (Chapter 2 – State of health and well-being); Charles Wangadya, AUC (Chapter 3 – Gender Equality); Oyebanke Abejirin, ECA (Chapter 4 – Economic Growth and Decent Work); Balgis Osman-Elasha, AfDB and Constant Adeniyi, AfDB (Chapter 5 – Life Under Water); Ligane Sene, Bruno Javier Avila Aravena and Jacob Assa, UNDP (Chapter 6 – Partnerships for Sustainable Development); and Farzana Sharmin and Oyebanke Abejirin, ECA (Chapter 7 – Policy Recommendations). Technical contributions from the following are greatly appreciated: Molla Hunegnaw, ECA; Lerato Martha Makana, ECA; Raquel Frederick, ECA; Jane Karonga, ECA; Nadia S. Ouedraogo, ECA; Jiaxin Zhao, ECA; Etayibtalnam Koudjom, ECA; Andrew Allieu, International Labour Organization; Utku Teksoz, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, UN; and Ali Zafar, UNDP. Data provision by the Africa Centre for Statistics (ACS) of ECA is highly appreciated. We appreciate the input from the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 focal points as well as the officials from United Nations organizations whose feedback during consultations in an expert group meeting in Addis Ababa from 15 to 16 April 2025 enriched the report. The report benefited from research, editorial, translation, printing, media and communications and secretarial support from Oyebanke Abejirin, ECA; Farzana Sharmin, ECA; Gaochao Deng, ECA; Torcia-Chanelle Banengai-Koyama, ECA; Iman Mohamed, ECA; Minda Hayles, ECA; Maiqi Ding, ECA; Rosette Y. Randrianarivelo, AUC; and Faustine Ekor, UNDP.

Abbreviations

ACS	African Centre for Statistics
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfDB	African Development Bank
AI	Artificial intelligence
ASDR	Africa Sustainable Development Report
AUC	African Union Commission
CO_2	Carbon dioxide
COP	Conference of the Parties
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EBMM	Ecosystem-Based Marine Management
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
EGM	Expert Group Meeting
EEZs	Exclusive Economic Zones
GBW	Great Blue Wall
GDP	Gross domestic product
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
ML	Machine learning
NAP	National Adaptation Plans
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
PARIS21	Partnership in statistics for development in the 21st century
SIDs	Small Island Development States
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WIO	Western Indian Ocean

Guide for readers

What is this report?

The ASDR is an annual publication that tracks the implementation status of the two complementary global and regional long-term development frameworks: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda 2063.

Who prepared this report?

Since 2017, the ASDR has been produced by the African Development Bank, the African Union, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The 2025 ASDR is the eighth in the report's series.

The report benefited from consultations conducted during an expert group meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 15 to 16 April 2025. The purpose of the meeting was to review, provide feedback and officially approve the draft report. The expert group comprised focal points for the 2030 Agenda / Agenda 2063 from African countries, as well as officials from United Nations organizations.

How is the focus of the report determined?

The report aligns with the theme and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are centred by the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) uevery year. In line with the 2025 session of the HLPF, this current report focuses on Goal 3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; and Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

This report also monitors the progress of Agenda 2063 goals. To this end, the goals of Agenda 2063 related to the five mentioned SDGs are also monitored (see Table 1). The report provides analysis for each of the five SDGs, targets and indicators and related Agenda 2063 goals, targets and indicators. Data limitations however prevent the analysis of all targets and indicators of the two Agendas.

In 2025, the report also notes how the "High 5s" of the African Development Bank complements the two Agendas in transforming and achieving development in Africa.

Related Strategic Objectives of Agenda 2063

Table a.1: ASDR 2025 SDG Focus and related Strategic Objectives of Agenda 2063

Sustainable Development Goals	Agenda 2063 STYIP Strategic Objectives
SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	Strategic Objective 6.2: Increase access to affordable and quality health care
SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Strategic Objective 6.3: Achieve gender parity in all spheres

Sustainable Development Goals	Agenda 2063 STYIP Strategic Objectives
SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	Strategic Objective 1.1: Enhance inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic growth
	Strategic Objective 1.2: Increase economic resilience
	Strategic Objective 1.3: Increase agriculture production and productivity
SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	Strategic Objective 1.4: Increase investment in blue economy
SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	Strategic Objective 2.2: Establish and make functional Continental Financial and Monetary Institutions
	Strategic Objective 2.3: Increase connectivity infrastructures that crisscross countries
	Strategic Objective 7.2: Enhance Africa's capacity for financing her development

Who should read this report?

1. Stakeholders engaged in policy discussions about the execution of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. They encompass government officials, intergovernmental group representatives, civil society members, NGO representatives, media professionals, academics and business representatives.

2. Regional analysts and national specialists seeking to uncover key concerns that necessitate additional investigation and devise methodologies to assess a country's progress in attaining the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

Where do the data come from?

The report draws on data from a number of sources, including data made available in the United Nations Global SDG Indicators Database.

For evaluating progress towards the SDGs, indicators are selected based on the availability of two or more data points for more than 40 percent of the countries in the respective country groupings. Data for countries in the African region were drawn from the Global SDG Indicators Database maintained by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/.

Lessons based on country experiences are also provided throughout the report to provide insights into how countries are working towards achieving the two Agendas. These experiences were gathered from country experts and reports.

How to interpret the results

Readers are advised to consider the following while reviewing the findings of this report:

- The results in this report cannot be compared with previous reports due to the use of a separate set of SDG indicators[1] and updated historical data. Changes are also made annually to incorporate new data as they become available.

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[1] Each year, the ASDR focuses on five SDGs. Except for SDG 17, which is measured every year, the remaining four change annually in line with the SDGs under review under the HLPF.

- Two different measures are used in the analysis:[2]

1. The Current Status Index provides a goal-level snapshot of progress and an analysis of where the African region stands on each goal. It was based on the progress made since 2015 in relation to the progress needed between 2015 to 2030. In other words, it measures how much progress has been made since 2015.

2. The Anticipated Progress Index provides a dashboard of expected progress by 2030 at the level of SDG targets and indicators and an assessment of how likely the region is to achieve individual SDG targets given the pace of progress. It measures the gap between the projected and targeted progress by 2030. In other words, it measures how likely the target will be achieved by 2030.

How is the report organized?

The report is organized into seven main chapters. In addition to this guide for readers, it has an executive summary which contains key messages and policy recommendations from the report. It also has an introductory chapter which provides a high-level summary of the goal-level achievement of the five SDGs under consideration on the continent and regional levels since 2015. The next five chapters drill down and look at the prospects and progress against each of the five SDGs and related Agenda 2063 goals. The final chapter distils conclusions and policy recommendations based on the analysis.

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[2] Detailed explanations on the methodology are included in the annex.

Executive summary

The 2025 ASDR reviews the status of the implementation of the two Agendas in Africa and offers policy recommendations to facilitate their attainment. As in previous years, the 2025 report aligns with the theme and corresponding Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) selected by the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development (HLPF) for any particular year.

In this context, the SDGs under review by the 2025 HLPF focus on good health and well-being (Goal 3); gender equality (Goal 5); decent work and economic growth (Goal 8); life below water (Goal 14) and strengthening global partnerships (Goal 17). Each SDG is analysed in relation to the corresponding goal of the African Union Agenda 2063.

The findings of the report highlight the need for Africa to accelerate progress on all five SDGs and strengthen statistical systems to track performance. Africa is making progress in 12 of the 17 SDGs, however the current pace of progress is insufficient to achieve the SDGs by 2030. Overall, data gaps prevent a full picture of the continent's performance.

Key findings

Opportunities remain amid multifaceted challenges

Africa was estimated to be home to 12 of the 20 fastest-growing economies in 2025, up from ten in 2024 and is projected to outpace global economic growth. Substantial opportunities exist despite the multifaceted challenges emanating from the debt burden, a worrying trend of jobless growth and rising global uncertainties. Making use of the demographic dividend, natural resources, digital technology, private sector investment and strong institutions will facilitate the transformative change needed for sustainable and inclusive development.

Africa needs to bridge a substantial financing gap to attain SDGs

According to an upcoming AfDB-ECA publication, Africa faces an astounding annual financing gap of between US$ 670 and US$ 762 billion by 2030, with over 80 percent of the gap concentrated in the LDCs. As such, Africa needs to bridge the substantial financing gap in order to achieve the SDGs.

1. Ensuring good health and well-being

Africa has made significant progress in health outcomes with some areas of improvement

Africa has made significant progress in health outcomes since 2015, including in terms of life expectancy, which has increased by three years, maternal mortality, which has dropped by 7.4 percent, reduced child mortality, increased incidence of skilled birth attendance to 75.7 percent from 61.8 percent in 2015, and notable strides in combating infectious diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria. Despite these gains, the continent continues to lag behind global averages in several health indicators. Notably, maternal mortality rates in Africa are still alarmingly high, and neonatal and under-5 mortality rates exceeding global targets. Though coverage of vaccination increased, disparities remain, especially for diseases such as human papillomavirus (HPV) and measles.

Many African countries are unlikely to attain SDG 3 by 2030, acceleration is warranted

It is unlikely for most African countries to achieve the full scope of SDG 3 by 2030. Factors contributing to this include disparities in health service access, inadequate infrastructure, healthcare worker shortages, high out-of-pocket expenditures, uneven implementation of health policies, access to essential medicines and diagnostics, income disparities, conflicts, and limited public health expenditure. Indeed, socioeconomic inequalities and inequities contribute towards disparities in health outcomes. Current public spending on health amounts to approximately 7 percent, well below the target of 15 percent of the national budget. However, increasing the efficiency of health sector spending will also be effective improving public health outcomes. Climate change and other emerging threats present new risks to health systems across the continent, compromising progress towards the 2030 target.

2. Achieving gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls

A holistic approach to gender equality is warranted

Despite the importance of Goal 5 as an enabler of overall sustainable and inclusive development, substantial gaps exist in the implementation of the Goal. Discriminatory laws and societal norms continue to pose significant barriers for women when it comes to accessing economic resources, property ownership, and financial services, limiting their opportunities and impeding job creation and economic growth in Africa. Only 15 countries have established strong legal frameworks that promote gender equality, while nearly 60 percent lack adequate data on these issues. In 2022, Africa was 20.3 percentage points below the world level for the implementation of legal frameworks that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality in employment and economic benefits.

Women's economic empowerment is low owing to discriminatory practices and lack of legal framework.

Despite establishing several mechanisms to ensure women's involvement in economic decision-making bodies, substantial gaps prevail. In 2022, 68 percent of women were in vulnerable employment, compared to 57 percent of men. The gender wage gap persisted, with women earning 21 percent less than men in highly skilled positions in 2023. Although women's access to education has improved, they continue to be underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields and vocational training due to entrenched societal norms and discriminatory practices.

Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) remains key

Violence against women continues to pose challenges to attaining Goal 5 in Africa. As of 2023, the proportion of women and girls subjected to sexual and physical violence remained at 24 percent, indicating a stagnating level. As many as one in five women and girls aged 15-49 in Africa and one in seven in North Africa have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the past year. Sexual violence by non-partners also remains a significant issue, with many cases going unreported due to stigma and fear of retaliation. African countries have made significant strides in combating VAWG by implementing various strategies. Thirty-six countries enhanced survivor support services such as shelters and legal aid, while 35 strengthened laws to prevent violence.

Harmful practices and care work remain a barrier to effective participation

Child marriage remains widespread, with 130 million women and girls in Africa being married before the age of 18 as of 2023. African countries make up 80 percent of the top 20 nations with the highest rates of child marriage, with the first seven from the continent. Female genital mutilation remains rife, with 34.6 percent of girls aged 15-49 years undergoing the practice in 2022. In addition to these harmful practices, women across Africa still shoulder a significantly higher burden of unpaid work than men. On average, women spend 249 minutes per day on unpaid care work compared to just 87 minutes for men, compromising their opportunities for labour-force participation.

Significant progress made in achieving gender parity in leadership and managerial positions
Achieving gender parity in leadership and managerial positions is crucial for empowering women. In 2023, women held 26 percent of parliamentary seats in Africa, up from 19 percent in 2015, and occupied only 43 percent of managerial positions, despite making up 53.5 percent of the workforce. Twenty-five countries in the Beijing+30 review have adopted temporary special measures such as gender quotas, such as the Sierra Leone 2023 law mandating a 30 percent female candidate quota for all jobs. By 2023, women held 34 percent of these seats in Sierra Leone, surpassing the 30 percent target of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063.

Gender disparities continue to prevail in asset ownership with substantial country and regional variations
Women in Africa continue to encounter significant obstacles in owning immovable assets, land and property owing to the existing cultural and legal barriers, with rates as low as 1 percent in Mali and as high as 73 percent in Ethiopia. Substantial gender disparities exist in digital technologies. The average gender gap in mobile phone ownership and Internet usage has narrowed by 8 percent, from 24 percent and 28 percent in 2020 to 16 percent and 19 percent in 2023, respectively, but remain at a low level.

3. Promoting decent work and economic growth

Progress towards achieving SDG 8 is slowing in Africa, owing to multifarious challenges
Despite the complementarity impact of decent work and economic growth in accelerating the progress of all SDGs and the African Union's Agenda 2063, Africa is slowly making progress towards achieving SDG 8, particularly in the areas of economic growth, young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and the tourism sector as a share of GDP. Africa's average annual GDP growth rate per capita was 2.7 percent in 2021 but fell to 0.7 percent in 2023. As high as over 23 percent of African youth are NEET, with significant gender disparities. Despite its huge potential, the tourism sector contributed to only 6.8 percent of Africa's GDP in 2023, albeit with significant post-pandemic growth. The multifarious challenges emanating from recent economic shocks, climate change, and geopolitical instability continue to hinder growth and decent job opportunities in the continent.

Quality of employment remains a concern in Africa
Labour productivity remains a concern in Africa, with output per worker dropping to 2.89 percent in 2024 from 4.2 percent in 2022. This figure is projected to be 3.5 percent for 2025, below the global average of 3.8 percent. Informality is high, with 83.1 percent of workers in informal employment compared to the global average of 57.9 percent, compounded by substantial gender disparities. Youth employment continues to be

concentrated in the unsecured sectors, with 71.7 percent of workers holding "insecure" jobs in 2023. Skills mismatches limit job opportunities despite rising education levels, with an alarmingly low participation rate of 2 percent in technical and vocational training. People with disabilities face systemic constraints with an employment rate of only 39 percent compared to 56 percent for those without a disability. Child labour remains a major concern, and over 92 million children are involved in child labour, 41.4 million of them in hazardous conditions. Of the five subregions, East Africa has 44.5 million children in child labour, amounting to 30 percent of its child population.

Africa needs to ensure resource efficiency, diversification, innovation, and support for MSMEs to address the productivity challenge

Africa needs to ensure resource efficiency, diversification, innovation, and support for micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Despite success stories from several countries, broader structural challenges persist, such as weak industrialization, infrastructure constraints, poor access to finance, poor economic governance, gender gaps, and capacity constraints. Public-private partnerships should also be leveraged to promote sustainable development.

African countries need to support decent job and economic growth through structural reforms

Digital transformation, being vital for SDGs and Agenda 2063, can facilitate e-governance, financial inclusion, trade facilitation, and credit access while boosting economic growth. Furthermore, AfCFTA should be leveraged to boost regional and global trade and ensure economic integration. Financial inclusion can also be encouraged by deliberate payment policies requiring accounts for disbursements. Overall, to realize SDG 8, Africa must prioritize youth employment, accelerate formalization and inclusive growth, end child labour and promote gender equality, drive digital and financial inclusion and leverage regional collaboration and integration.

4. Promoting conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources

Africa is progressing albeit slowly in attaining Goal 14

Africa's extensive coastal and inland water systems support millions of people's livelihoods, yet they are under significant threat from overfishing, pollution, urbanization, and climate change. Over two million tonnes of litter polluted African beaches in 2022, up from 1.7 million tonnes in 2017. Globally, the figure increased from 10.5 million tonnes to 12.4 million tonnes over the same period. In Central and West Africa, more than 95 percent of beach litter originated from land-based sources in 2021 and 2022. In 2023, the Average Ocean Health Index for African countries score stood at 52.8, lagging the global average of 70.

Multiple and interrelated issues compromising sustainable ocean and marine ecosystems

Overfishing continues due to insufficient monitoring and weak regulatory enforcement. Africa saw a slight increase in the share of sustainable fisheries in its GDP, increasing from 0.27 percent in 2011 to 0.42 percent in 2021. A total of 15.9 percent of marine areas are designated as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), exceeding the 10 percent target set for 2020 in SDG 14. By 2023, Africa had protected 46.7 percent of key biodiversity areas, slightly above the global average. However, inadequate data on fish stock sustainability, pollution levels and the implementation of international regulations limit effective planning and action. Rapid urbanization in coastal cities puts further strains on marine ecosystems, highlighting the need for integrated environmental and urban policies.

A holistic approach, robust partnerships and collaboration is warranted to achieve sustainable ocean and marine ecosystems

Addressing various challenges of a sustainable ocean is vital for the continent's food security, economic growth, and climate resilience. African countries should foster an environment that integrates ecological health with socioeconomic growth, improving governance, and ensuring effective community participation to transform its ocean resources from a source of vulnerability to a driver of inclusive growth and resilience. Greater emphasis on ecosystem-based approaches, investment in research and technology, effective governance, regional collaboration and adherence to international agreements will be essential in addressing the threats to marine and freshwater resources.

5. Strengthening partnerships for sustainable development

Huge financing challenges must be overcome to attain sustainable and inclusive development

Africa faces massive financial challenges to attaining sustainable development and Agenda 2063 amid declining ODA, falling foreign direct investment (FDI), growing debt burdens, and weak domestic resource mobilization. Government revenues as a percentage of GDP have shown improvement since 2020 yet remain below the global average. Inflows of foreign direct investment to Africa dropped by 3.4 percent to US$ 52.6 billion in 2023, representing only 6 percent of the total FDI to developing economies. Debt sustainability remains a key concern with debt servicing in Africa increasing from 8 percent in 2015 to 9.6 percent in 2022. The issue of debt sustainability continues to be a growing concern in many countries due to repeated shocks, tight financial conditions in the global capital markets and currency depreciation.

Africa made progress towards SDG 17 with some areas in need of acceleration

Africa made significant progress in digital transformation, trade and science, technology, and innovation (STI). Improved Internet connectivity, digital skill-building initiatives such as the Meltwater Entrepreneurial School of Technology (MEST) and regional infrastructure projects support economic growth. Despite this progress, challenges remain in terms of affordability and rural access gaps. Notably, the AfCFTA holds the potential to boost intra-African trade and reduce dependency on external markets, but non-tariff barriers and limited productive capacity are persistent barriers, particularly in a context of global tariffs and geopolitical uncertainties. Expanding capacity-building through digital platforms and targeted programmes for young people and women is central to leveraging the demographic dividends of the continent.

Robust statistical systems for monitoring and accountability are warranted for sustainable and inclusive development

While Africa has made progress in terms of data infrastructure and open data initiatives, significant gaps remain in data availability, quality, and disaggregation. Modernization through digital technologies and geospatial tools is improving efficiency, but many countries still depend heavily on donor support for censuses and surveys.

Strengthening national statistical systems and regional cooperation is vital for evidence-based policymaking.

A "whole of system" approach to implementing SDG 17

Overall, achieving SDG 17 in Africa requires an integrated strategy involving domestic reform, regional integration, digital innovation, global partnerships, and inclusive financing mechanisms. African countries should diversify their financing sources, prioritizing domestic revenue and partnerships with the private sector, diaspora and philanthropy. A reform of the global financial architecture is warranted to reduce borrowing costs and enhance access to affordable, long-term, and climate-related financing. Tackling trade barriers, improving infrastructure, and building productive capacities will boost competitiveness, industrialization, and regional value chains. Strengthening regional integration, particularly through AfCFTA, requires collaboration among regulators and policymakers. Finally, investment in capacity-building, science, technology, innovation, and data systems is vital for effective implementation of SDG 17.

Key recommendations

African countries are unlikely to attain the five SDGs presented here by 2030. Accelerating the progress towards the SDGs and Agenda 2063 will require a holistic approach and mutually reinforcing initiatives. African countries are advised to:

Leverage solidarity through South-South cooperation

In the context of recent geopolitical uncertainties, South-South cooperation is more important than ever. African countries should leverage a common platform to advocate for unique solutions and opportunities for Africa and tap into the opportunities of regional collaboration to attain the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Countries should also capitalize on upcoming international conferences, including the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, the 2025 HLPF and the Second World Summit for Social Development to advance a unified African position on priorities for the implementation of the two Agendas.

Invest in skills and education at all levels

Investment in skills and education at all levels is essential to tap into the demographic dividend and ensure inclusive development in Africa. An integrated approach to developing skills and education for the workforce will facilitate job creation and social cohesion. Countries need to ensure continued investment in early childhood, primary, secondary, and higher education to enhance critical thinking and specialized expertise. Investing in skills and education at all levels will act as a catalyst to attaining sustainable and inclusive development.

Invest in youth

Countries should support engagement with young people as strategic partners, with investments in education systems and skills development, to equip learners with digital literacy, entrepreneurial skills and the capabilities needed for decent work while also promoting the proposed global youth platform as an important avenue for ensuring youth representation in decision-making process. A holistic strategy involving all stakeholders, including governments, organizations and investors, will help to support a dynamic youth force leading the growth and development trajectory in Africa.

Mobilize finance and strengthen partnerships

Countries should mobilize finance to accelerate progress towards the SDGs through domestic resource mobilization, innovative financing sources, debt sustainability and a reform of the global financial architecture to better reflect the unique needs of the African countries. Countries should strengthen partnerships to foster sustainable consumption and production methods. In addition, countries should rigorously review plans and programmes in areas with transformational effects on the attainment of several SDGs, such as infrastructure, STI, digitalization, food systems, renewable energy systems, value added manufacturing and climate action.

Strengthen institutions for sound economic governance

Countries should develop and implement systems for evidence-based mutual accountability at the local, national, regional and international levels. Establishing mechanisms for improving accountability and reducing corruption would be critical. Strong institutions incorporating increased accountability and transparency will facilitate the creation of a mutually reinforcing mechanism for attaining sustainable and inclusive development.

Invest in data infrastructure

Strengthening data collection and data use to design and implement interventions and track progress towards attainment of the SDGs, including through the following measures, is crucial: (i) Enhancement of data integration, data infrastructure and interoperability in all countries, private sector collaboration and data governance; (ii) Capacity-building in relation to data analytics; and (iii) Use of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence. Countries should invest in improving the collection, dissemination, and analysis of data related to national development plans, SDGs and Agenda 2063.

Chapter 1:
Regional overview

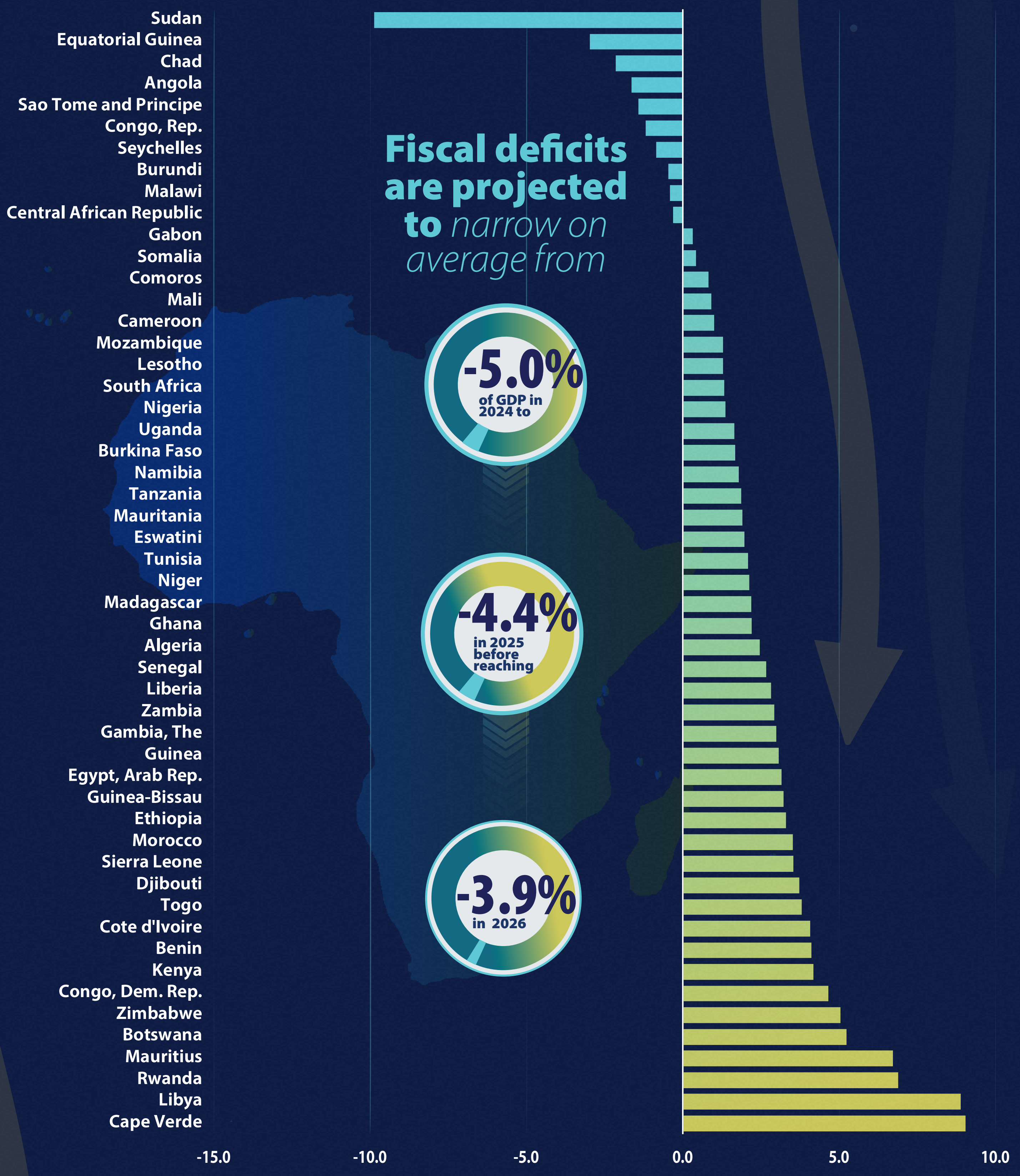
1.1 Introduction

Progress towards attaining the SDGs remains insufficient in Africa. Five years before the 2030 Agenda deadline and the start of domestication of the Agenda 2063 STYIP, 2025 is significant for Africa.

The GDP per capita growth is showing robust performance for the majority of countries, with eight countries having a growth rate of over 4 percent between 2021 and 2023 (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1:

GDP per capita growth between 2021 and 2023 (average annual %)



Fiscal deficits are projected to *narrow on average from*

-5.0% of GDP in 2024 to

-4.4% in 2025 before reaching

-3.9% in 2026

Fiscal space continues to be a key constraint for the continent amid exorbitant debt, high interest rates, a volatile United States dollar, subdued global economic growth and the recent geopolitical tension arising from the tariff war. Rising uncertainties add further constraints to the already compromised fiscal balance. However, fiscal deficits are projected to narrow on average from -5.0 percent of GDP in 2024 to -4.4 percent in 2025 before reaching -3.9 percent in 2026 (ECA, 2025).

Fiscal balance is further compromised due to excessive debt levels and exorbitant debt servicing costs. Africa's debt-to-GDP ratio declined from 67.3 percent of GDP in 2023 to 65.2 percent in 2024 and is projected to fall marginally further to 62.1 percent of GDP in 2025 (ibid.). High debt servicing costs continue to affect countries' ability to spend on sustainable development.

Furthermore, jobless growth, a high degree of informality and low productive employment compromise the potential for economic growth. The region holds the world's highest male unemployment rate and the second highest female unemployment rate after Latin America. Over 145 million employed people live in extreme poverty while nearly 76 million young Africans are neither employed nor in education or training (NEET) (ILO, 2025). Labour markets are dominated by informality, with 84 percent of employment being in the informal sector, where jobs are insecure, low-wage and lack social protection (ILO, 2025). For example, 95 percent of businesses in Kenya operate informally, while sectors with high productivity (mining, finance) employ less than 5 percent of the labour force, compared to 52 percent in low-productivity agriculture (ECA, 2025).

Africa is undergoing a period of rapid urbanization. Currently, some 45 percent of the population lives in urban areas and this figure is projected to hit 60 percent by 2050 (ECA, 2025). This is likely to exacerbate the existing challenges of poverty and inequality and to reduce the quality of life of urban dwellers. Over the next three decades, Africa will experience an unprecedented increase in its urban population, doubling from 704 million to 1.4 billion by 2050. It will become the continent with the second largest urban population after Asia (3.5 billion). Cities will absorb 80 percent of the total projected population growth and two out of three Africans will live in urban areas by 2050 (the Sahel and West Africa Club (OECD/SWAC), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Cities Alliance and United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa)., 2025). In many African cities, rapid urbanization has been accompanied by insufficient planning and governance to accommodate the growing population, resulting in growth in slums and informal settlements, inadequate urban infrastructure including poor water, sanitation and health services, poor public transportation services and recurrent power outages (Kamana et al., 2024).

In contrast, however, urbanization could provide significant opportunities for Africa's development. A 2022 report produced by the Sahel and West Africa Club (OECD/SWAC) with AfDB and ECA analysed data from four million firms and individuals in 2,600 cities spanning 34 African countries and noted that urbanization boosts GDP through the creation of agglomeration economies, with approximately 30 percent of Africa's GDP per capita growth in the last 20 years being due to urbanization. It also noted that urbanization drives economic transformation, with skilled workers in urban areas representing 34 percent of the workforce, compared to less than 15 percent in rural areas. It also improves access to financial services, with 49 percent of urban households having a bank account, compared to only 17 percent of rural households and increases education levels, with urban dwellers receiving about 8.6 years of formal education compared to rural dwellers receiving only around half of that. Urbanization also benefits rural areas in terms of education, employment and access to finance and infrastructure and provides new opportunities for economic development and rural integration (OECD, UNECA, AfDB, 2022). Indeed, the ECA has noted that urbanization has the potential to accelerate the AfCFTA (ECA, 2025).

Climate change further exacerbates the development challenges facing Africa, driving a cycle of displacement and conflict. The 2024 *State of Climate in Africa* report noted the continent saw its highest recorded temperatures, 0.86 °C above the 1991–2020 average. North Africa faced a third consecutive below-average cereal harvest in 2024 due to drought and heat, with subregional production down 7 percent on the 2019–2023 average. Six years of drought in Morocco caused 2024 agricultural output to drop by 42 percent from its five-year average (WMO, 2025).

In 2024, extreme weather impacted multiple regions. Heavy rains from March to May caused flooding in Kenya, Tanzania and Burundi, displacing over 700,000 people and causing fatalities. In July, the Gofa zone of Ethiopia experienced severe landslides from heavy rainfall, forcing 15,000 people to evacuate amid ongoing risks. These events highlight climate shocks as "threat multipliers", increasing fragility across Africa (WMO, 2025; UN-Habitat, 2024).

In 2025, the compounding effects of global, regional and internal conflicts continued to derail Africa's progress towards the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, with domino effects on economic stability, food security and social cohesion. The war in Ukraine, while less central to global grain markets than in 2022–2023, has been supplanted by new conflict-driven crises closer to home. For instance, the protracted civil war in Sudan has been catastrophic for civilians and the numbers are staggering. Some 30.4 million people – over two-thirds of the total population – are in need of assistance, from health to food and other forms of humanitarian support. The fighting has led to economic collapse, sending the prices of food, fuel and other basic goods soaring, putting them beyond the reach of many households (Lennon, 2025). The spillover effects of the conflict, including cross-border refugee flows into Chad and South Sudan, have strained neighbouring states' resources and heightened regional instability (Lennon, 2025).

The recent tariff war between the US and China has had a ripple effect on Africa. China is the continent's largest bilateral trade partner (US$282 billion in 2023), a major provider of development finance and an important source of FDI, which reached US$1.8 billion in 2022 (ECA, 2025). A negative impact on the Chinese economy is, therefore, likely to have a knock-on effect on Africa (See Box 1.1).

Geopolitical tensions, shifting foreign policy priorities and an erosion of multilateralism threaten gains in development cooperation, identified as a key factor for the attainment

Box 1.1: The recent tariff war highlights the importance of regional integration and South-South cooperation

Recent global economic dynamics and dramatic shifts in US trade policy, whereby trade became a tool of coercive diplomacy, have added unprecedented levels of uncertainty for African economies. The near-universal 10 percent increase in tariffs on 2 April 2025, by the US Administration has created substantial uncertainties in the global economy, with varying impacts across economies depending on their exposure to US trade, financial linkages and broader geopolitical relationships. The duty-free access provided through the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has been undermined with the introduction of this tariff policy and its concomitant disruptive effects. For instance, Lesotho, which primarily exports diamonds and clothing, faced a 50 percent tariff on its exports. Similarly, the island nation of Madagascar, which exports relatively modest amounts of vanilla and clothing to the US, faced a staggering 47 percent tariff on its exports. Currently, a 90-day exemption is in effect, during which time a universal 10 percent baseline tariff was imposed.

It is notable that the US accounted for just 4.9 percent of Africa's total goods exports in 2023. Trade with the US in services outpaces trade in goods, with trade in services accounting for 18 percent and 19 percent of total African service exports and imports, respectively. The US tariffs are not expected to have a significant direct impact on trade in services (ECA, 2025).

Despite the small size and exposure to tariffs, the impact on Africa might be compounded by the disruptive effects of the US-China tariff war through spillover effects (Cadot et al., 2015; Flaaen et al., 2019) of global value chains. Beyond the direct effects of recent policy shifts of world leading economies, global policy uncertainty could have even wider indirect consequences. For instance, the interconnected nature of global trade and continued disruptions in US-China economic relations create significant spillover risks for African economies (Cadot et al., 2015; Flaaen et al., 2019; ECA, 2025b).

In this context, speedy and thorough implementation of AfCFTA as a strategic adjustment to the new trade dynamics is the way out. In addition, solidarity with all developing countries and building strong and sustainable South-South partnerships will be warranted.

of SDGs. Moreover, the high number of internal conflicts compromises the potential of attaining sustainable and inclusive development.

Amid global uncertainties, it is important to focus on the opportunities open to Africa. The importance of improving its integration and connectedness, having responsive public institutions, resolving conflicts peacefully, empowering the citizenry, integrating vulnerable and marginalized people and being an influential global player cannot be underestimated.

African countries need to forge a unified position to advocate for unique solutions and opportunities for Africa and tap into the opportunities of regional collaboration to attain the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. In addition, countries should rigorously review plans and programmes in areas with transformational effects on the attainment of several SDGs, such as infrastructure, STI, digitalization, food systems, renewable energy systems, value added manufacturing and climate action. Indeed, achieving the Agenda 2063 STYIP (see Table 1.1) which embodies these values will boost Africa's growth, development and resilience.

[1] https://ppi.worldbank.org/en/snapshots/region/sub-saharan-africa

Table 1.1: Agenda 2063's STYIP – moonshots and corresponding aspirations

Moonshots	Aspirations
1 – Every African Union member state attains at least middle-income status	1 – A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
2 – Africa is more integrated and connected	2 – An integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's renaissance
3 – Public institutions are more responsive	3 – An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
4 – Africa resolves conflicts peacefully	4 – A peaceful and secure Africa
5 – African culture and values are explicit and promoted	5 – Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics
6 – African citizens are more empowered and more productive	6 – An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children
7 – Africa is a strong and influential global player	7 – An Africa that is a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner

Increasing regional integration through the AfCFTA will be instrumental. In addition, enduring advantages, including the continent's youthful population, abundant resources, vibrant workforce, and mobile technological advancements should be drawn upon.

1.2 Progress at the goal level

Having examined Africa's historical performance towards achieving the SDGs since 2015 and having extrapolated the performance to the target year of 2030, it can be deduced that, under a business-as-usual strategy, Africa is unlikely to achieve any of the five goals analysed in this report (see Figure 1.2). Acceleration is needed to achieve all five goals, namely those relating to goals on good health (SDG 3), gender equality (SDG 5), decent work (SDG 8), life below water (SDG 14) and partnerships (SDG 17).

A subregional analysis of Africa's performance against the five mentioned SDGs provides insights into the continent's performance as a whole (See Figures 1.3–1.7). With the exception of West Africa, all four subregions have seen a regression towards attaining SDG 8 on decent work. Despite the positive trend, West Africa requires acceleration to attain SDG 8 on decent work. Apart from SDG 8, the remaining four goals require acceleration for all five subregions. Notably, differences exist in terms of the level of attainment of these five goals. In terms of SDG 3 on good health and well-being, all five subregions are making progress. However, progress in Southern and West Africa is faster than elsewhere. Despite data constraints, progress towards SDG 5 on gender equality exhibits a similar trend, although the overall level of progress is lower than that towards SDG 3.

The level of achievement for SDG 14 on life below water is the highest in the Southern Africa, followed by West Africa. However, progress level is slow for all five subregions, requiring substantial acceleration efforts. Finally, SDG 17 on partnership also requires acceleration with significant subregional

Figure 1.2: Progress on SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and, 17 – Africa

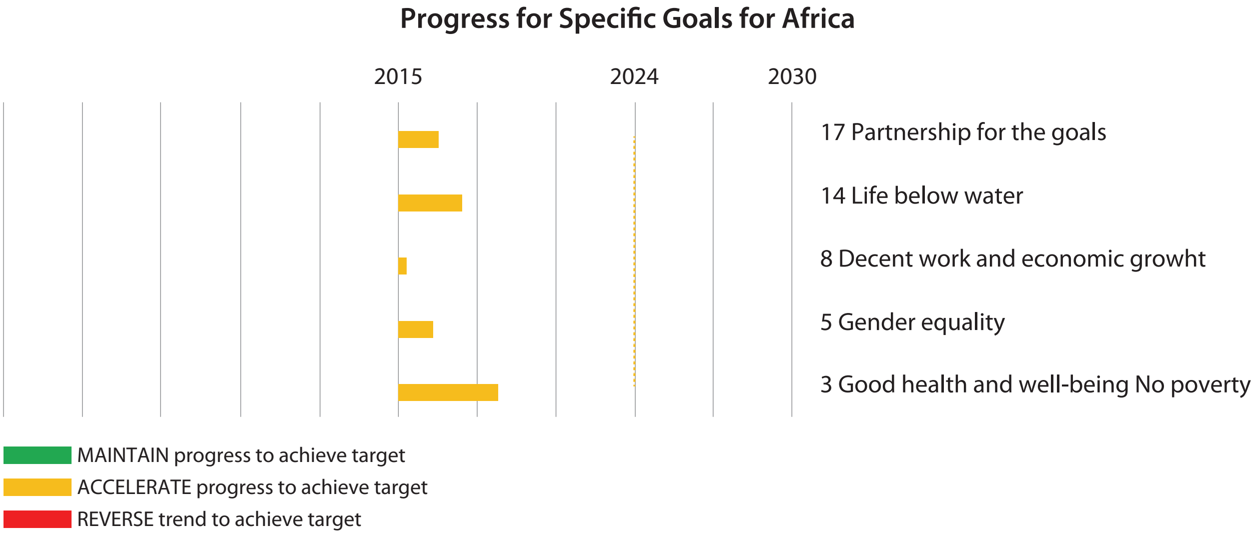
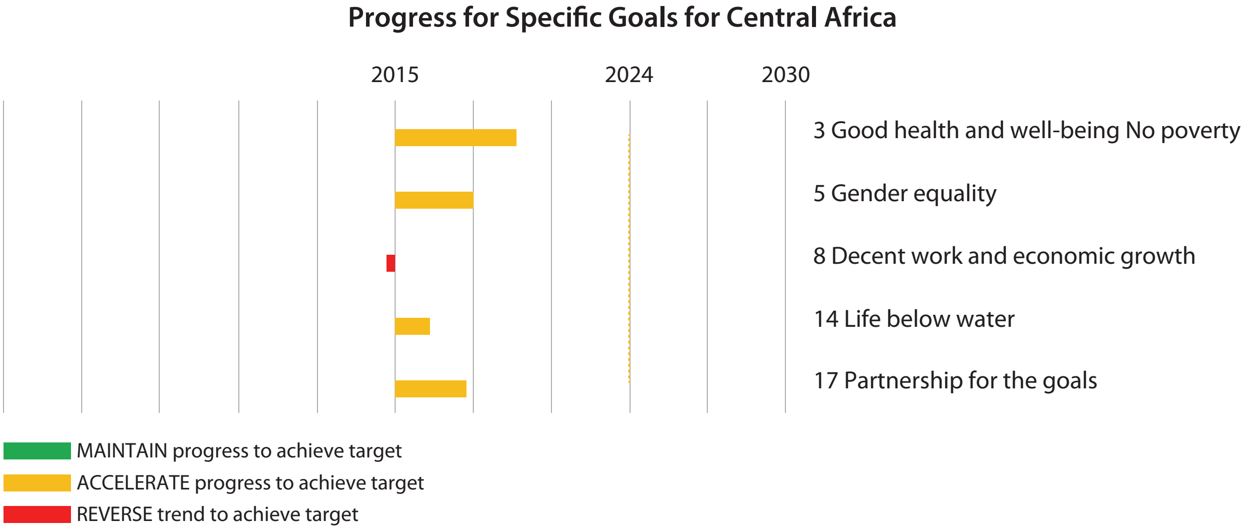


Figure 1.3: Progress on SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14, and 17 – Central Africa



variations. For this SDG, the Western Africa has the highest level of achievement, while the Southern Africa has the lowest level of achievement towards the 2030 target.

Figure 1.4: Progress on SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14, and 17 – Eastern Africa

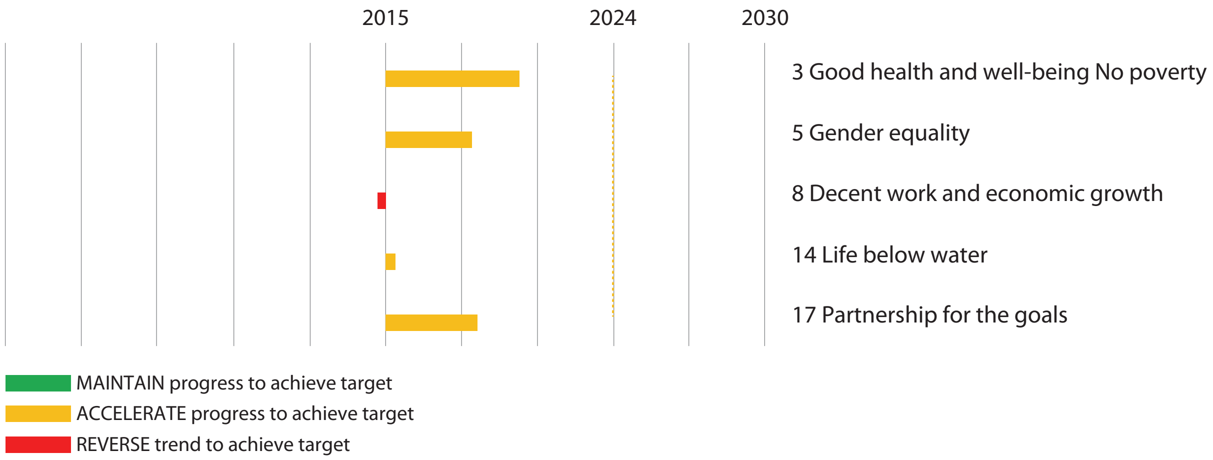


Figure 1.5: Progress on SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14, and 17 – North Africa

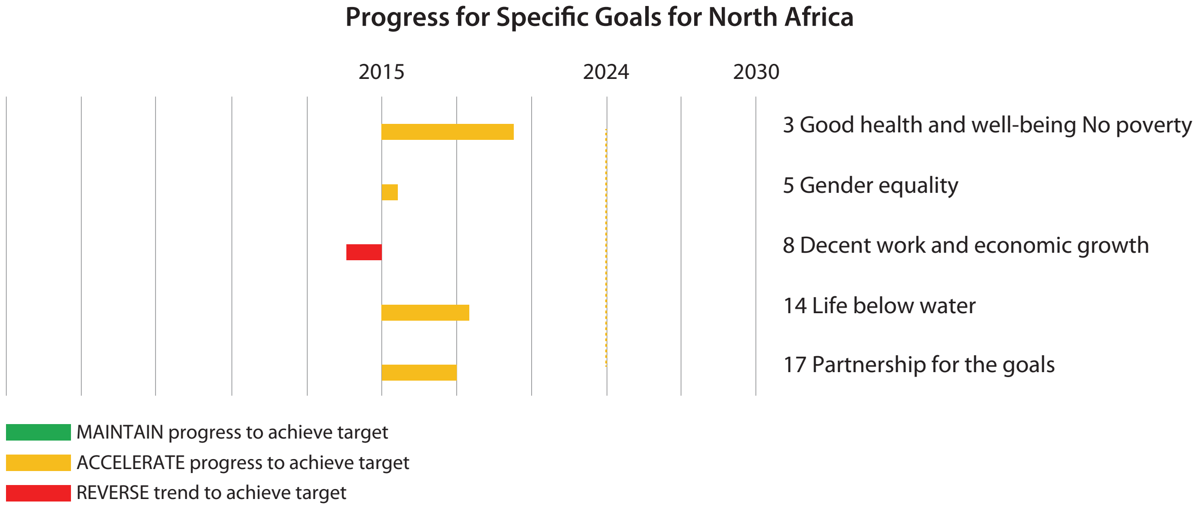

Progress for Specific Goals for North Africa

Figure 1.6: Progress on SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14, and 17 – Southern Africa

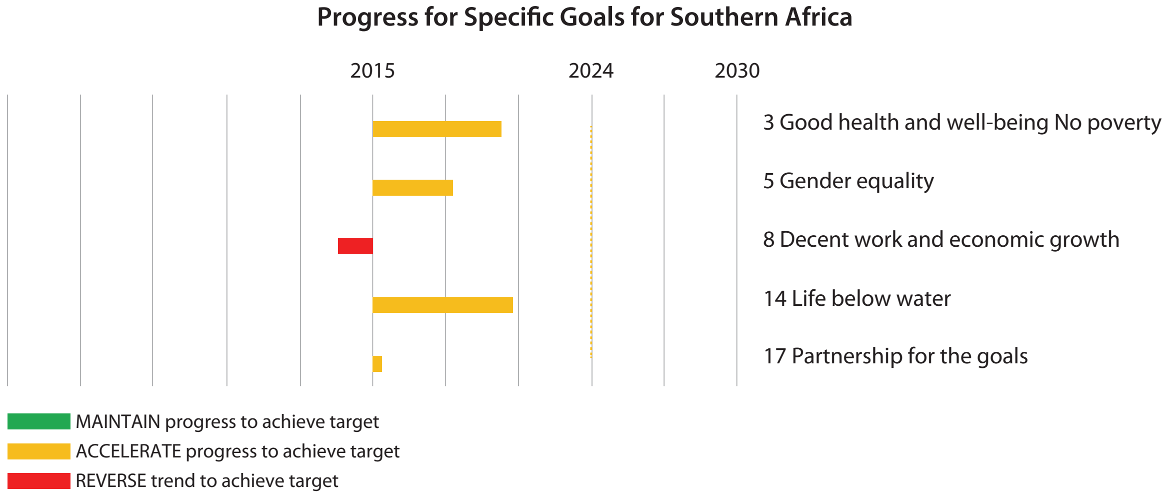
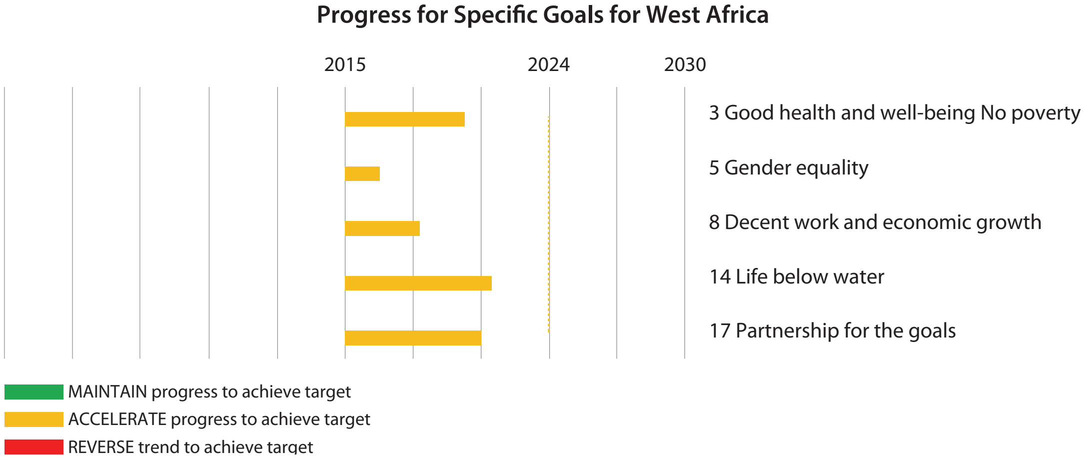

Progress for Specific Goals for Southern Africa

Figure 1.7: Progress on SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14, and 17 – West Africa



1.3 Progress at the target level

Of the 63 targets within SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17, 46 of them are measurable (see Figure 1.8). However, only two targets are on track to be achieved by 2030. These are targets 14.5 (conservation of coastal areas) and 17.19 (statistical capacity).

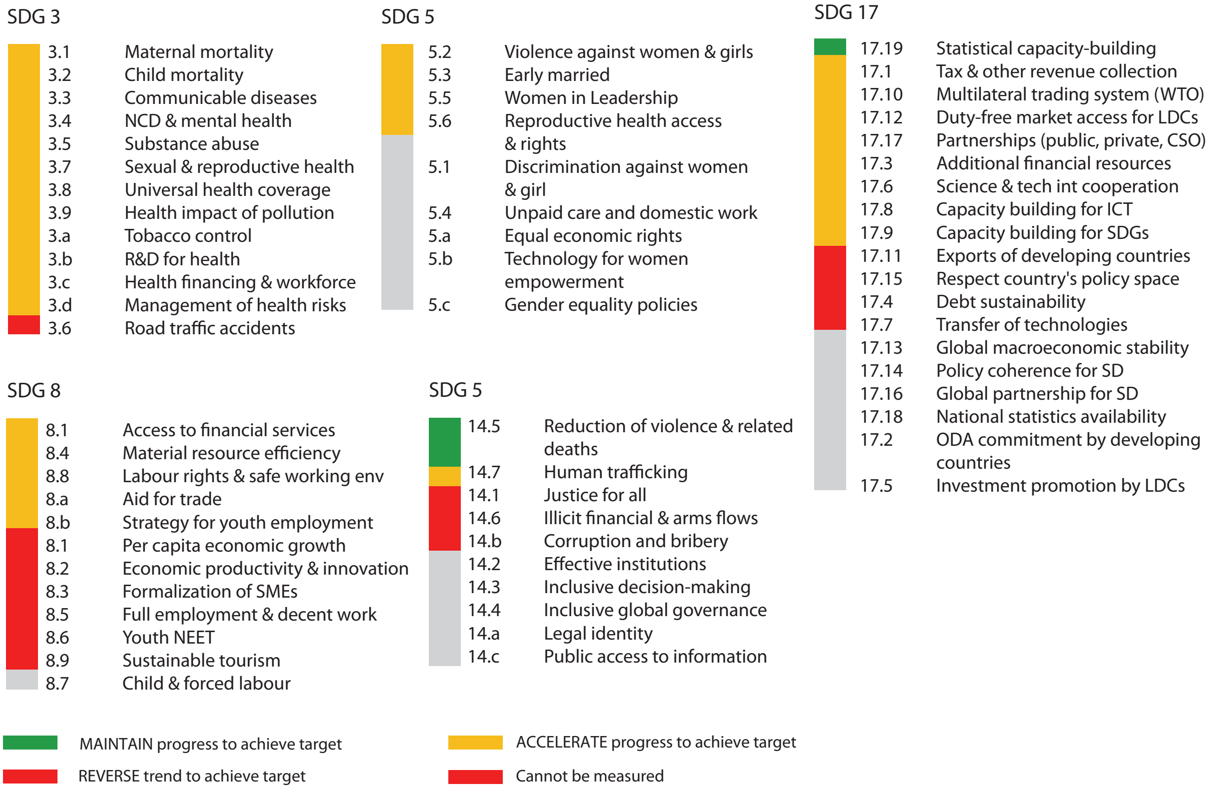
Of the remaining measurable targets, the region needs to accelerate progress towards achieving 30 targets and to reverse negative trends for 14 targets. Gaps in data, with 17 targets not being measured, prevents a full picture of the progress on the continent from being painted. SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 14 on life below water and SDG 17 on partnership have significant data limitations, compromising a holistic understanding of progress. The next five chapters analyse the progress and prospects of each of these SDGs and their related Agenda 2063 goals.

1.4 Financing Africa's development

Financing is required for African countries to achieve sustainable development. However, it is projected that development needs will outweigh the available resources for sustainable development, leading to a significant financing gap. According to a recent report by the OECD, the total financing available for sustainable development has rose by 22 percent from US$ 4.31 trillion in 2015 to US$ 5.24 trillion in 2022 and is expected to rise by another 22 percent from 2022 to be US$ 6.37 trillion in 2030 (see Figure 1.1). However, "annual financing needs to achieve the SDGs by 2030 surged by 36 percent over the same period, from US$ 6.81 trillion in 2015 to 9.24 trillion in 2022, driven by climate challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic, supply chain disruptions and rising food and energy prices." The SDG financing gap, in other words the difference between the needed and available financing for funding SDGs, is projected to continue to increase. According to the OECD, "If the SDG financing gap continues to grow at its 2015-2023 rate, it will reach USD 6.4 trillion by 2030" (OECD, 2025).

The ECA, in collaboration with the AfDB, has endeavoured to estimate the SDG financing gap for African countries. A robustness application of three different estimation

Figure 1.8: Africa dashboard – Action that must be taken by African countries on the SDG targets in order to achieve them by the 2030 deadline, SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17



SDG 3

🟨	3.1	Maternal mortality
🟨	3.2	Child mortality
🟨	3.3	Communicable diseases
🟨	3.4	NCD & mental health
🟨	3.5	Substance abuse
🟨	3.7	Sexual & reproductive health
🟨	3.8	Universal health coverage
🟨	3.9	Health impact of pollution
🟨	3.a	Tobacco control
🟨	3.b	R&D for health
🟨	3.c	Health financing & workforce
🟨	3.d	Management of health risks
🟥	3.6	Road traffic accidents

SDG 5

🟨	5.2	Violence against women & girls
🟨	5.3	Early married
🟨	5.5	Women in Leadership
🟨	5.6	Reproductive health access & rights
⬜	5.1	Discrimination against women & girl
⬜	5.4	Unpaid care and domestic work
⬜	5.a	Equal economic rights
⬜	5.b	Technology for women empowerment
⬜	5.c	Gender equality policies

SDG 17

🟩	17.19	Statistical capacity-building
🟨	17.1	Tax & other revenue collection
🟨	17.10	Multilateral trading system (WTO)
🟨	17.12	Duty-free market access for LDCs
🟨	17.17	Partnerships (public, private, CSO)
🟨	17.3	Additional financial resources
🟨	17.6	Science & tech int cooperation
🟨	17.8	Capacity building for ICT
🟨	17.9	Capacity building for SDGs
🟥	17.11	Exports of developing countries
🟥	17.15	Respect country's policy space
🟥	17.4	Debt sustainability
⬜	17.7	Transfer of technologies
⬜	17.13	Global macroeconomic stability
⬜	17.14	Policy coherence for SD
⬜	17.16	Global partnership for SD
⬜	17.18	National statistics availability
⬜	17.2	ODA commitment by developing countries
⬜	17.5	Investment promotion by LDCs

SDG 8

🟨	8.1	Access to financial services
🟨	8.4	Material resource efficiency
🟨	8.8	Labour rights & safe working env
🟨	8.a	Aid for trade
🟨	8.b	Strategy for youth employment
🟥	8.1	Per capita economic growth
🟥	8.2	Economic productivity & innovation
🟥	8.3	Formalization of SMEs
🟥	8.5	Full employment & decent work
🟥	8.6	Youth NEET
🟥	8.9	Sustainable tourism
⬜	8.7	Child & forced labour

SDG 5

🟩	14.5	Reduction of violence & related deaths
🟨	14.7	Human trafficking
🟥	14.1	Justice for all
🟥	14.6	Illicit financial & arms flows
🟥	14.b	Corruption and bribery
⬜	14.2	Effective institutions
⬜	14.3	Inclusive decision-making
⬜	14.4	Inclusive global governance
⬜	14.a	Legal identity
⬜	14.c	Public access to information

🟩	MAINTAIN progress to achieve target
🟨	ACCELERATE progress to achieve target
🟥	REVERSE trend to achieve target
🟥	Cannot be measured

approaches indicates an annual financial gap ranging from US$ 395 billion to US$762 billion in 2030.

Using the preferred elasticity approach,[3] the estimated annual SDG financing need for Africa is approximately US$ 1.67 trillion. After accounting for available public expenditures, the financing gap remains substantial, ranging from US$ 670 billion to US$ 762 billion in 2030, depending on economic growth scenarios. More than 80 percent of this gap is concentrated in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in Africa , which have limited domestic fiscal resources. Addressing these disparities will require targeted international support to LDCs and fragile states.

On the subregional level, East and West Africa exhibit the largest financing needs and gaps, driven by the presence of some of the continent’s most populous countries, including Nigeria, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Figure 1.9). North and Southern Africa report smaller SDG financing gaps, reflecting their relatively higher levels of development and broader fiscal space. Nevertheless, achieving the SDGs in North and Southern Africa requires improving spending efficiency by addressing

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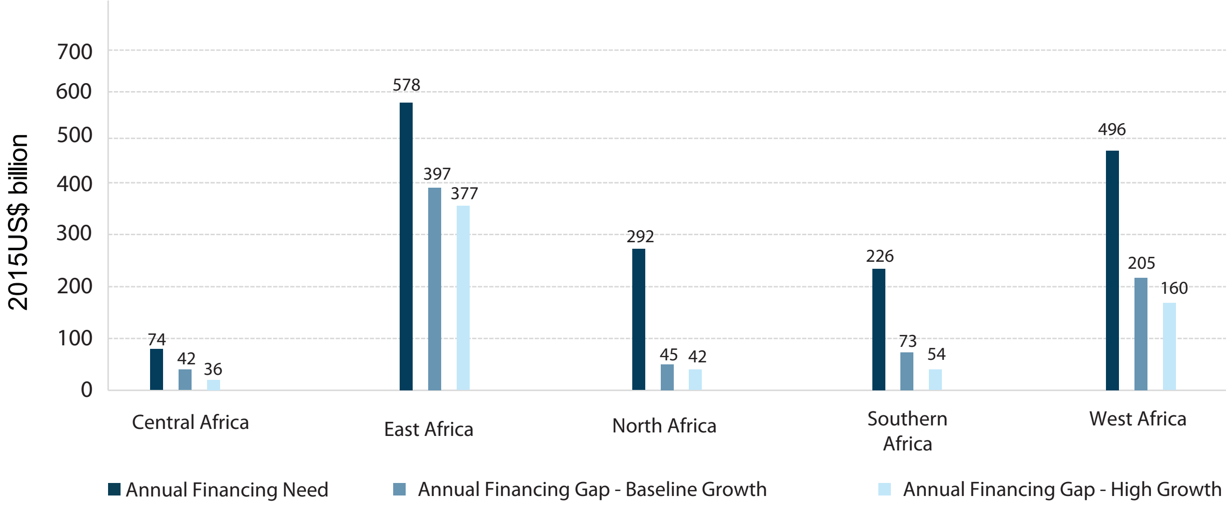
[3] The elasticity approach to estimating SDG financing needs is based on the premise that achieving SDG outcomes is closely tied to investments in key areas such as education, transport, energy, and water and sanitation. This method quantifies the relationship between public expenditures and SDG achievements through a regression-based analysis, estimating the elasticity between expenditure and outcome improvements. The approach calculates financing needs by applying estimated elasticities to meet pre-defined SDG targets in 2030. The results are generated at the country level, adjusting for population, GDP levels, and public expenditure ratios, and aggregated to provide regional and continental estimates.

Figure 1.9: Estimated annual SDG financing needs and gaps in 2030 by subregion



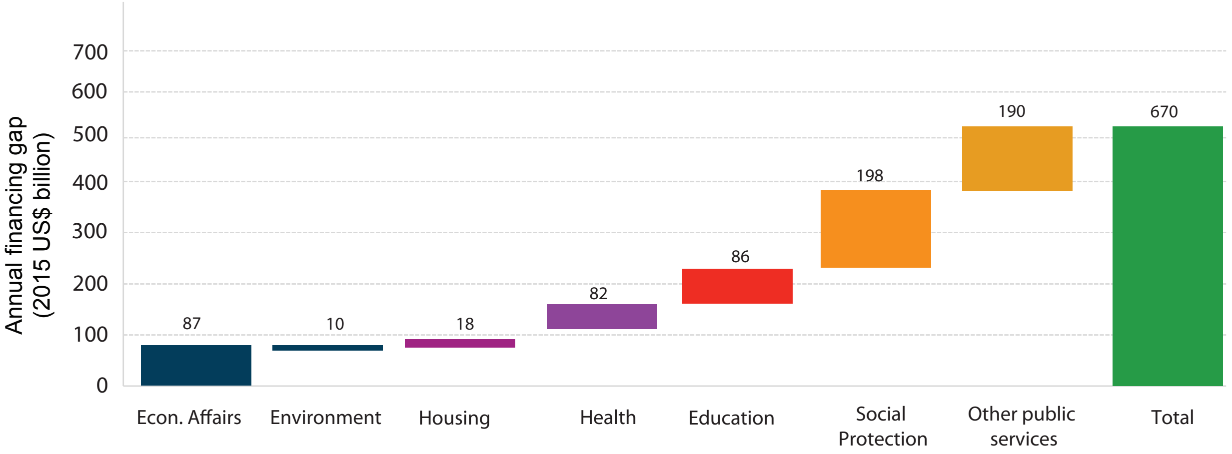
Source: AfDB & ECA (2025). Mind the Gap: Accelerating Economic Transformation in Africa. Forthcoming.

corruption and implementing more effective budgeting and expenditure management practices. Central African states also face severe fiscal constraints, with domestic fiscal resources covering less than half of their total SDG needs.

The distribution of financing gaps by government expenditure functions highlights the critical areas requiring additional investment (Figure 1.10). The largest gaps are observed in government spending for social protection, economic affairs, education and health, excluding other public services. Social protection, in particular, accounts for the highest financing shortfall, underscoring the human welfare-oriented nature of SDG investments. To achieve the SDGs, African countries will require substantial support for social spending to ensure a decent standard of living for all, alongside investments in economically critical infrastructure.

Nevertheless, different public and private financing options from domestic and international sources are available for

Figure 1.10: Estimated annual financing gaps by government expenditure function in 2030 under a high-growth scenario in Africa



Source: AfDB & ECA (2025). Mind the Gap: Accelerating Economic Transformation in Africa. Forthcoming.

African countries to explore. In the recently concluded African Conference of Ministers of Finance and ARFSD 2025, the need for domestic resource mobilization was stressed. Considering recent geopolitical tensions, stability could be considered a crucial imperative for financing sustainable development. Domestic resource mobilization offers much-needed stability in this context. Moreover, soaring food and energy prices, the rising cost of borrowing, high public debt and debt servicing costs, the limited fiscal space and heightened spending demand for various fiscal measures highlight the importance of mobilizing domestic resources.

There are methodological similarities and differences among various methods to estimating the SDG financing gap. Box 1.2 alludes to the critical issues of these methodologies and their impacts on the estimation of financing gaps.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) highlights the fact that mobilization and the effective use of domestic resources is central to the pursuit of sustainable development financing (United Nations, 2015). It identifies several areas for action, including: strengthening domestic resource mobilization, fostering international tax cooperation, combating illicit financial flows, enhancing the efficiency of public expenditure, capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer, to enhance the fiscal space and meet the SDGs.

Despite the crucial role that public finance plays and its huge potential, it suffers from several systematic and structural constraints in Africa. For instance, the continent has the lowest tax-to-GDP ratio in the world. Moreover, the efficiency of public spending is also an issue. African governments provide substantial allowances to potential taxpayers that reduce the effective tax base and actual tax revenues collected. The extent of this can vary to as much as 15 percent of the total revenue being lost through tax expenditures. These lost revenues could have been otherwise channelled for financing for development (ECA, 2023)

Another particular area of concern for public financing in Africa is the high prevalence of illicit financial flows (IFFs). In addition to these complexities, the global financial architecture is still grossly inadequate for low-income countries striving to respond to the imperatives of the SDGs and structural transformation. Considering there are only five years remaining before 2030, domestic resources need to be mobilized effectively and linked with national development priorities and the SDGs, with a focus on sectors that promote inclusive and sustainable growth.

First, domestic resource mobilization (DRM) needs to be improved and strengthened. In many developing countries around the world, government revenue as a percentage of GDP remains low. Figures from 2023 show that government revenue as a percentage of GDP averaged 29.59 percent across 150 countries, ranging from as little as 4.59 percent in Sudan to 100.72 percent in Kiribati. Forty-three of these countries had government revenue contributing less than 20 percent to GDP. Figure 1.11 presents these countries with the highest 10 (in green) and lowest 10 (in orange), and a few other countries in between (in blue). DRM could create more sustainable, long-term funding for social services and infrastructure.

Box 1.2: Methodological similarities and differences among various approaches to estimating SDG financing gaps

Substantial differences as well as similarities exist between various methodological approaches to estimating financing gaps for achieving the SDGs. One notable example is the methodological differences between the ECA and IMF approaches. The ECA approach estimates SDG financing needs as a function of public expenditure required to achieve improvements in SDG outcomes across sectors critical to economic transformation. It models these needs under different levels of SDG achievement (high, medium and low) and alternative GDP growth scenarios (baseline and high-growth at the 75th and 90th percentiles). Specifically, the elasticity of SDG outcomes is estimated with respect to public spending—that is, the percentage point improvement in an outcome resulting from a 1 percent increase in public expenditure. Financing needs are then derived by calculating the expenditure required to meet target values for each SDG indicator. The maximum value across all targets is taken as the overall financing need. Financing gaps are then calculated by subtracting currently available financing from this total need.

In contrast, the IMF SDG Financing Tool serves as an interactive platform to assess macroeconomic coherence of countries' SDG financing strategies. It treats macroeconomic variables—such as GDP growth, inflation, interest and exchange rates, and government revenues—as exogenous inputs defined by the user. The tool estimates available public and private financing under these scenarios and compares it with exogenously provided SDG cost estimates to determine financing gaps. These cost estimates are derived from a prior IMF study (Gaspar et al., 2019), which used a benchmarking approach. In that approach, countries are assumed to require the minimum or median spending levels observed in countries that have already achieved the SDGs.

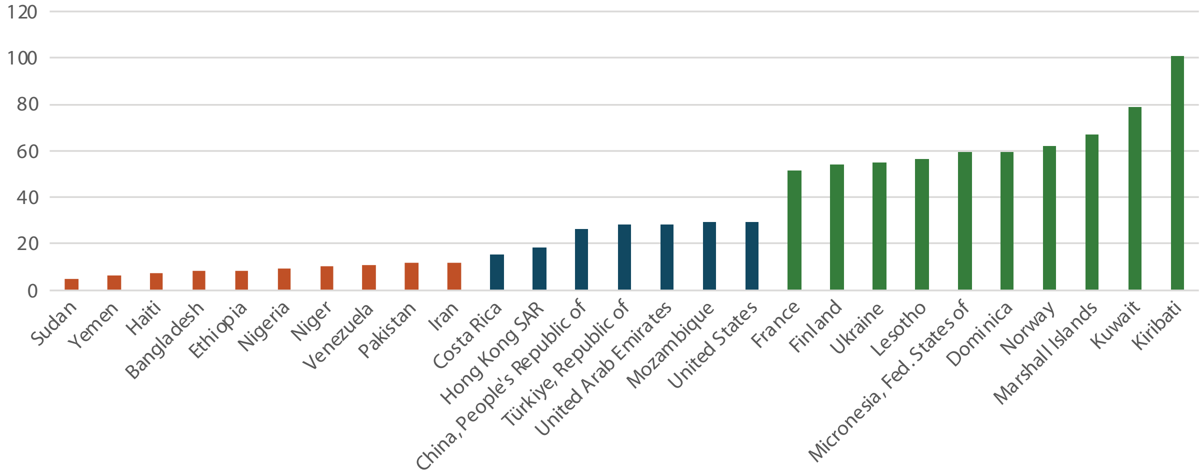
There are both methodological similarities and differences between the two approaches. One similarity is that both rely on historical country performance data to estimate SDG financing needs. However, while the IMF approach benchmarks spending levels against those of higher-performing countries, the ECA approach estimates the functional relationship between spending and SDG outcomes using country level panel data. The ECA model is more flexible in capturing non-linearities (such as diminishing marginal returns) and interactions across expenditure categories (such as health spending influencing education outcomes).

Another distinction is that the IMF model does not currently provide aggregate estimates for all African countries or for UNECA subregions. While a full comparative discussion of SDG costing methodologies—there are also other methods beyond the IMF tool and ECA method—is beyond the scope of ASDR 2025, it should be recognized that multiple approaches exist, each with different assumptions and use cases.

Significant challenges in DRM need to be addressed. Countries face issues of structural constraints and inefficiencies, such as low tax base, inadequate progressive taxation system, high tax incentives, corrupt tax administration, inefficient public spending and high prevalence of IFFs. However, investing in digitalized tax systems, including electronic filing and audit tools, can improve compliance and transparency. Furthermore, reforming inefficient tax expenditures and curbing IFFs will be critical for expanding the fiscal space. The AfCFTA also presents opportunities to enhance revenue through trade integration, but this will require harmonized tax policy, customs modernization and formalization of informal cross-border trade.

Countries should also improve their efficiency of public spending through closing tax loopholes. African governments provide substantial allowances to potential taxpayers that reduce the effective tax base and actual tax revenues collected. The extent can vary from as high as 15 percent of the total

Figure 1.11: Government revenue, percent of GDP (% of GDP), 2023 – Select countries



Source: (IMF, 2025)

revenue lost through tax expenditures. These lost revenues could have been channelled to financing for development.[4]

A blend of progressive tax systems, digitalization through electronic tax filing, coordination and regular reporting of tax incentives to remove ineffective tax expenditures would enable the potential use of DRM.[5]

Remittances, which provided the second biggest financial flow after government revenue, is another funding source that can be leveraged. In 2023, remittances amounted to US$ 476 billion. Aid, in contrast, totalled US$ 223.3 billion in the same year, representing 0.37 percent of Gross National Income (GNI), as opposed to the proposed 0.7 percent of GNI recommended by the SDGs (OECD, 2025). Developing countries should carry out studies on how to effectively use remittances to fund sustainable development. One crucial element would be to reduce transfer costs, which at 4.6 percent remain higher than SDG target of 3 percent, resulting in a loss of US$ 16 billion annually for developing country households (OECD, 2025).

Private finance must also be harnessed to facilitate Africa's growth. Innovative financing mechanisms, including blended finance, diaspora bonds, impact investing and climate-related instruments must be used to crowd in private capital, diversify risk and create new funding streams. Indeed, the main challenge is not a lack of capital but a shortage of investment-ready vehicles that meet fiduciary and regulatory thresholds for private investors. To address this, blended finance instruments must be structured in ways that reflect African market realities, including currency volatility, political risk and shallow domestic financial markets. Instruments such as first-loss guarantees, performance-based grants and pooled investment vehicles, especially those targeting MSMEs, and infrastructure can help crowd in private investors if combined with robust risk mitigation frameworks and standardized deal structures.

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[4] https://www.uneca.org/economic-governance-report-ii-%28egr-ii%29

[5] https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/sites/default/files/resources/documents/com2023/E_ECA_COE_41_4_E-E_ECA_CM_54_4_E.pdf

Reforms in the global financial and debt architecture will be crucial to supporting African countries financing development efforts. Indeed, it has been identified that the current global financial architecture is imbalanced towards addressing African countries' needs. Unfair credit ratings have led to a call for an African-led, independent credit rating agency.

At the global level, the 2025 Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) in Seville, Spain will be monumental in the global development finance landscape. Indeed, it is hoped that the FfD4 will result in a renewed global compact that includes fairer tax rules, more effective debt restructuring mechanisms, a rechannelling of resources such as Special Drawing Rights through African financial institutions, stronger action on IFFs and enhanced access to climate funding for Africa and other developing countries. Indeed, it will be crucial for Africa to be recognized not as a recipient of aid or reforms, but as a key partner in providing solutions to contemporary systemic challenges.

Chapter 2

Sustainable Development Goal 3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Key messages:

- In general, the African continent has seen significant improvements in health conditions and health outcomes over the past two decades, over and above those of other parts of the world. Moreover, these gains have been evenly spread across the continent.

- Despite these positive trends, there is still room for significant improvement, with Africa lagging behind other regions in many areas relating to SDG 3.

- As things stand, it is unlikely that countries in the region will achieve most of their SDG 3 targets by 2030. This underscores the importance of taking action to reverse these trends and accelerate progress towards improving the health and well-being of people in the continent.

- This imperative is ever more pressing in light of the climate emergency the world currently faces, which is likely to be particularly damaging for Africa's prospects for inclusive sustainable development, good health and well-being.

Table 2.1: Sustainable Development Goal 3 and related Strategic Objective in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Sustainable Development Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	Strategic Objective 6.2: Ensure healthy lives and promote nutrition

2.1 Progress and prospects for the achievement of SDG 3 and Related Strategic Objectives of Agenda 2063

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". It is widely accepted that good population health boosts labour and human capital for economic growth. Against this background, SDG 3 aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages, promote universal health coverage and ensure equitable access to health services. It also seeks to end preventable deaths of newborns and children under the age of five, and end epidemics.

The comprehensive implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 are contingent upon good health, pointing to the interconnected nature of both Agendas. SDG 3 emphasizes the ongoing burden of HIV and other infectious diseases, urbanization, the climate crisis and broader economic and social inequalities while also acknowledging emerging challenges such as NCDs and road safety on the potential of attaining sustainable development. Agenda 2063, on the other hand, aims for a prosperous Africa with inclusive growth and sustainable development and prioritizes health and nutrition.

Recent health and well-being trends in Africa – an overview

Africa has seen significant improvements in health conditions and health outcomes since 2015, over and above those in other parts of the world. According to the United Nations 2024 World Population Prospects estimates, during this time, life expectancy at birth in the region increased by three years, from 60.84 years in 2000 to 63.84 in 2023, equivalent to an increase of 4.93 percent, significantly higher than the world average of 2.18 percent and higher than any other region in the planet. As a result of these improvements, the life expectancy gap between Africa and the world as a whole declined from 15.03 percent in 2015 to 12.75 percent in 2023. These gains have been evenly spread across the continent, being particularly high in East and Central Africa, which have seen their life expectancies at birth increase by 3.97 and 3.49 years since 2015, respectively. Overall, only seven countries in the continent have experienced slower life expectancy growth than the world average since 2015, five of which – Algeria, Egypt, Mauritius, Seychelles and Tunisia – already had relatively high life expectancies at birth, higher than or close to the world average.

Several factors have contributed to these improvements in the health of African peoples across the continent, as outlined in detail in this chapter. Over the past two decades, there have been significant reductions in maternal and child and neonatal mortality, as well as significant advances in putting an end to the AIDS and malaria epidemics. The continent has also seen significant improvements in vaccine coverage, particularly for diseases for which vaccine coverage has been traditionally low in the region. Furthermore, governments across the region are better placed today to manage both national and global health risks than they were two decades ago. Moreover, these gains have generally been evenly spread across all subregions in the continent.

While the continent has experienced important gains in improving the health of its population, there is still room for significant improvement, with Africa lagging other regions in many areas. On the one hand, studies show that differences in regional health outcomes could lie in other forms of inequalities. Indeed, income inequalities could lead to health inequalities given that health inequalities exist within the socioeconomic conditions where people are born, live and work, in addition to inequities in wealth, resources and power (Pickett et al., 2024). Nonetheless, one area that gains can be made is in terms of increasing the efficiency of existing public health resources. Findings show that African countries' health spending efficiency levels lags those of other emerging markets and developing economies in Asia and the western hemisphere (Garcia-Escribano et al., 2022; Grigolia & Kapsoli, 2018). Lower income inequality, health interventions that increase access to basic health services and reduced corruption would be key to driving efficiency gains in the health sector (Garcia-Escribano et al., 2022).

As things stand, it is unlikely that countries in the region will achieve most of their SDG 3 targets by 2030, which highlights the importance of taking action to reverse these trends and accelerate progress in improving the health and well-being of people in the continent.

This imperative is ever more pressing in the face of the climate emergency the world currently faces, which is not only likely to be particularly damaging for Africa's prospects for inclusive sustainable development but also has serious health implications. Increasing public investment in the health sector to reach the Abuja Declaration commitment of allocating at least 15 percent of national budgets to health, would go a long way in achieving this.

Health and well-being in Africa in the context of climate change

In addition to the issues raised above, Africa, like all other regions of the world, has to contend with the challenges posed by climate change, which has an important health dimension. Addressing these challenges will require countries and governments on the continent to take action to mitigate the health impacts of climate change.

Thus, according to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2022), the coming years are likely to see an increase in diseases, injuries and deaths as a result of the growing number of extreme weather events associated with climate change, the effects of increased heat stress, and the projected growth of vector and waterborne diseases. Coupled with these factors, reduced food production from crops, livestock and fisheries linked to more extreme weather conditions are already resulting in growing levels of malnutrition, weakening the health of the population, especially children – and are likely to continue doing so in the future. Added to this, damages to social and health infrastructures caused by recurrent climate-related disasters is likely to impair the health sector response to the impact of climate change.

The African continent is particularly vulnerable to these impacts, due to its exposure to extreme weather events associated with climate change and its limited preparedness, including in the area of health. Data from the World Bank indicates that Africa accounts for 66.7 percent (40 out of 60) of countries globally deemed most vulnerable to climate change-induced health impacts (World Bank, 2017).

Particularly vulnerable countries, include Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Niger, Gabon, and Madagascar. As a reference, 110.4 million people were affected by disasters in Africa in 2022 alone, according to WHO (2024), accounting for 59.6 percent of the total people affected globally. This gives an insight into the scale of Africa's heightened exposure to the impacts of climate change.

The Sixth Assessment Report of the IPCC highlights that climate change is already impacting certain health outcomes in Africa, such as temperature-related mortality. Moreover, risks for most health outcomes are projected to increase with global warming, with young children, elderly people, pregnant women, individuals with pre-existing morbidities, physical labourers and people living in poverty or affected by other socioeconomic determinants of health being the most vulnerable. It also points out that women may be more vulnerable to the impact of climate change than men. In this context, in the absence of adequate management and mitigation measures, current and projected morbidities and mortalities will put additional strain on health, social and economic systems in the African continent (IPCC, 2022).

2.1.1 Reducing the global maternal mortality in the continent

Table 2.2: SDG Target 3.1 and Indicators 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 and related target and indicators in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 3.1: By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births Indicator 3.1.1: Maternal mortality ratio Indicator 3.1.2: Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	Target 6.2.2: Reduce maternal mortality rate to 175 deaths per 100,000 live births, and under-five and neonatal mortality to 25 and 15 deaths per 1000 live births respectively Indicator 58: Maternal mortality ratio Indicator 59: Under-five mortality rate Indicator 60: Neonatal mortality rate

Maternal mortality rates (MMR) have seen a sharp decline in Africa. However, they remain significantly above the world average and the SDG target set for this indicator. Given current trends, Africa is unlikely to meet its SDG target for maternal mortality by 2030.

MMR have seen a sharp decline in Africa, from 727.9 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 487.4 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020, equivalent to a 33 percent drop. There are, however, significant differences in MMR levels and trends within the continent.

MMR numbers in North Africa are much lower than both Africa as a whole and global MMR rates, and the MMR rates there have more than halved between 2000 and 2020, from 214.8 to 90.7 deaths per 100,000 live births. Southern Africa has also experienced a sharp decline in its MMR of 51.6 percent between 2000 and 2020, from 407.6 to 197.4 deaths per 100,000 live births. For the remaining three regions – East, Central and West Africa – declines in MMR have also been significant, albeit to a lesser extent. Moreover, MMR levels remain very high in all three regions at 402.2, 624.9 and 737.5 deaths per 100,000 live births, respectively (see Figure 2.1).

Despite these improvements in reducing maternal mortality in the continent, as of 2020, MMR rates were double the global level, and six times higher than the 2030 Agenda target of 70 deaths or fewer per 100,000 live births. In this regard, given current trends, Africa is unlikely to meet its SDG Target 3.1. by 2030.

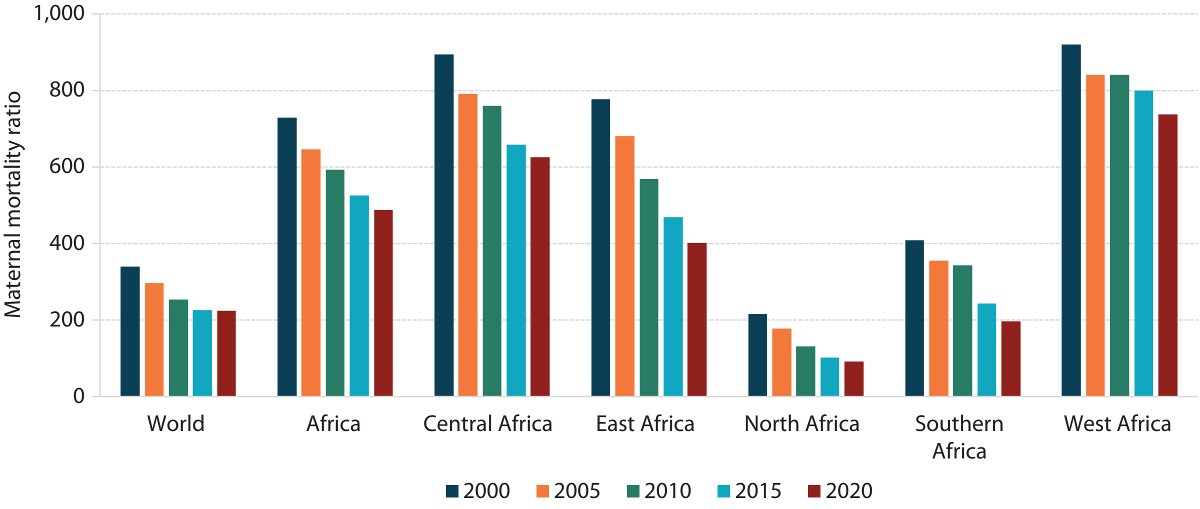
Countries such as Burkina Faso and Burundi have implemented free health care for pregnant women and children under the age of five to improve maternal and infant mortality outcomes, among other things (see Box 2.1).

Notable increase in the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

In examining maternal mortality trends, it is also important to take into consideration the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel, as this increases the chances of preventing maternal deaths. The global target in this regard, is to increase the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel to nearly 100 percent by 2030. According to Figure 2.2 below, significant progress has been made towards this statistic around the world. Between 2000 and 2020, the percentage increased from 61 percent to 83.9 percent. Progress in Africa has also been significant, with this proportion increasing from 42.8 percent in 2000 to 75.7 percent in 2020, although there remains a long way to go to reach the global average.

Africa has the highest proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel in Africa, at 98.8 percent, closely followed by Southern Africa (96.9 percent). East Africa has improved the most between 2000 and 2020, with the proportion of births attended by skilled personnel jumping from 24.3

Figure 2.1: Maternal mortality rates in various regions of Africa between 2000 – 2020



Source: UNDESA

Box 2.1: Free health care for pregnant women and children under five in Burkina Faso

Free health care for pregnant women and children under five, which came into effect in April 2016, has significantly reduced the mortality rate in Burkina Faso. This is a flagship measure of the Government of Burkina Faso aimed at improving access to healthcare services for vulnerable groups. Free health care for pregnant women and children under five represents an important step towards universal health coverage, ensuring full care for 25 percent of the Burkinabe population, approximately five million people.

Free health care for pregnant women and children under five covers the direct costs of curative care in various public health facilities and centres, including Health and Social Promotion Centres (CSPS), Medical Centres with Surgical Unit (CMA); Regional Hospital Centres (CHR) and University Hospital Centres (CHU). The costs covered include maternity expenses (deliveries, including caesarean sections, care during pregnancy, consultations, additional examinations, etc.), care for children under five, family planning (since June 2019), hospitalization, medications and medical supplies, blood products, and fuel for medical evacuations within the healthcare system.

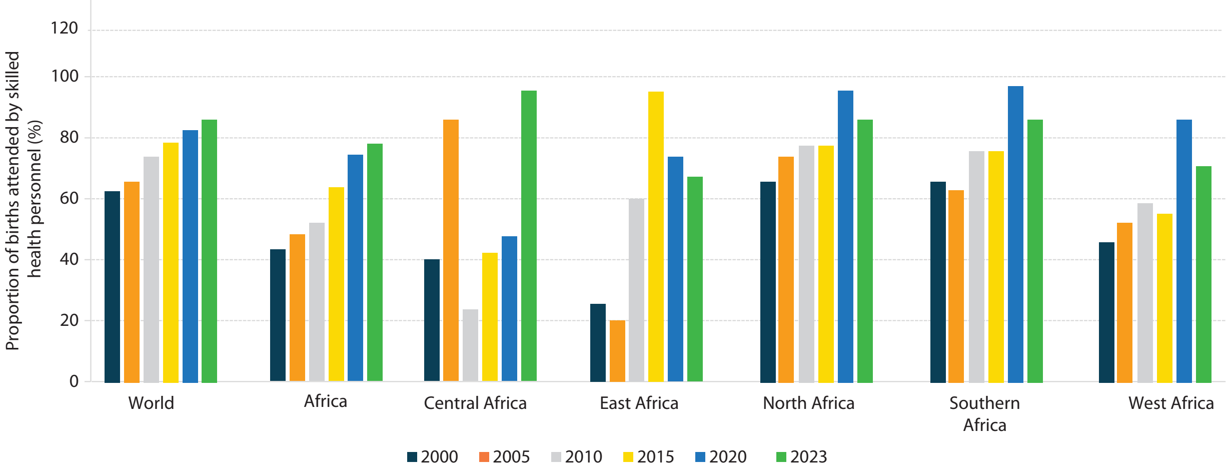
After eight years of implementation, free healthcare has contributed to reducing the maternal mortality rate by more than 59 percent. Other significant impacts include the increased use of healthcare services, a significant reduction in consultation delays, an increased number of assisted births, a reduction of maternal and infant mortality, an improvement of the health of women and children and an improvement of household living standards.

Source: Government of Burkina Faso (2025)

percent to 75.9 percent during this period. Central Africa, which is the region with the second highest maternal mortality ratio in the continent, has the lowest percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel in Africa, at 46.1 percent in 2020, barely six percentage points higher than in 2000, when it stood at 40.2 percent.

The persistently high maternal mortality rates in Africa are driven by a combination of health system failures, social determinants, gender inequalities, and external factors (Onambele, et al., 2023; WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank, & UNDESA, 2023). Health system failures manifest as delays in seeking and receiving care, poor quality

Figure 2.2: Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (%) in Africa



Source: UNDESA

of treatment, shortages of essential medical supplies, and weak accountability. Socioeconomic disparities further exacerbate the issue, as limited access to education and income inequalities disproportionately affect certain populations, increasing their vulnerability to maternal mortality. Gender biases and harmful norms continue to deprioritize women's access to essential reproductive health services, limiting their ability to receive necessary medical attention. Additionally, external factors such as armed conflict, climate change, and humanitarian crises contribute to the fragility of healthcare systems, making it even more difficult to provide adequate maternal health care in affected regions (WHO, 2024b).

2.1.2 Ending preventable deaths of newborns and children

Despite significant improvements over the past two decades in reducing under-5 and neonatal mortality rates in the continent, Africa remains far from achieving set targets for SDG 3.2. Under-five mortality rates dropped very significantly across the African continent between 2000 and 2022, with gains evenly spread across all regions. The greatest improvements were reported in East Africa (60.4 percent), followed by Southern Africa (59.4 percent) and North Africa (55.1 percent). However, with the exception of North Africa, which presented under-five mortality rates of 24.63 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2022, all other regions presented rates which were significantly higher than the world estimate of 37.1 in 2022, and also significantly higher than the SDG target of 25 per 1,000 live births. In this regard, with the exception of North Africa, if current trends persist, the continent is unlikely to meet its SDG 3.2.1. target for under-five mortality rate by 2030 (see Figure 2.3).

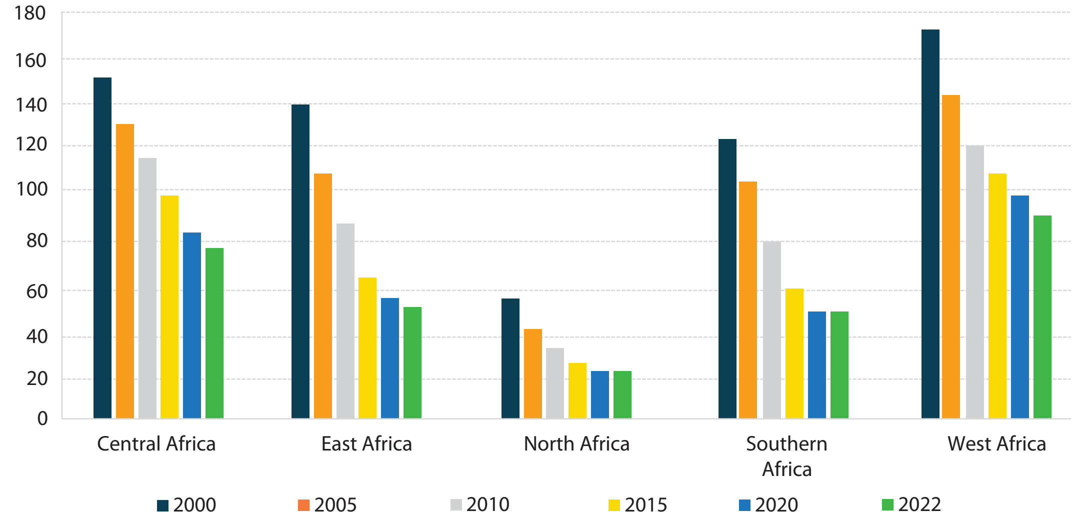
Table 2.3: SDG Target 3.2 and Indicators 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 and related target and indicators in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 3.2: By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births Indicator 3.2.1: Under-5 mortality rate Indicator 3.2.2: Neonatal mortality rate	Target 6.2.2: Reduce maternal mortality rate to 175 deaths per 100,000 live births, and under-five and neonatal mortality to 25 and 15 deaths per 1000 live births respectively Indicator 58: Maternal mortality ratio Indicator 59: Under-five mortality rate Indicator 60: Neonatal mortality rate

Neonatal mortality rates have reduced significantly across the continent

Neonatal mortality rates have seen significant reductions across the African continent, driving global improvements against this SDG indicator. Moreover, these improvements have been evenly spread across the various parts of the continent. North Africa is the region which has experienced the sharpest decrease, with neonatal mortality rates dropping by 40.23 percent between 2000 and 2020, from 26.6 to 15.9 deaths per 100,000 births during this period. This is followed by Southern Africa (36.0 percent),

Figure 2.3: Under-five mortality rate (deaths per 1000 live births)

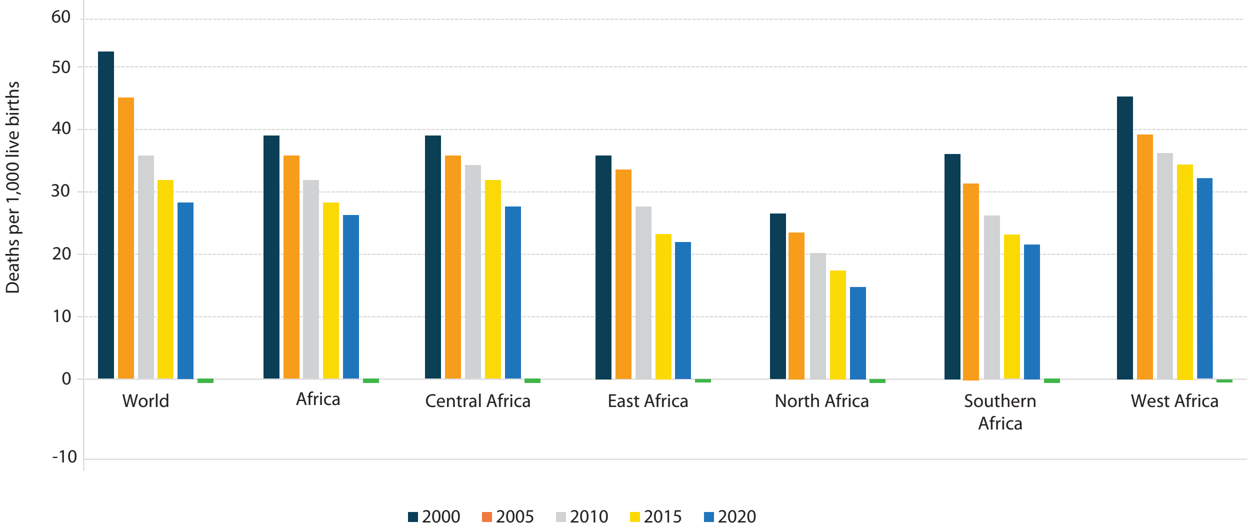


Source: UNDESA

East Africa (34.3 percent), West Africa (27.3 percent) and Central Africa (26.5 percent). West Africa is the region with the highest neonatal mortality rate in the continent: 32.6 deaths per 1,000 births in 2020 (see Figure 2.4).

In order to achieve SDG 3.2, Africa must implement targeted interventions focusing on improving neonatal care, increasing access to quality health care, and enhancing disease prevention efforts. Expanding vaccination programmes, improving maternal health services, and strengthening health systems will be crucial in reducing preventable child deaths. Increased investment, political commitment, and collaboration among governments, international organizations, and healthcare providers will be essential to accelerating progress towards child survival goals (WHO, 2024c).

Figure 2.4: Neonatal mortality rate (deaths per 1000 live births)



Source: UNECA/UNDESA

While Africa has made substantial strides in reducing child mortality over the past three decades, the region still faces significant challenges in meeting the SDG 3.2 target. Without urgent and intensified efforts, millions of preventable child deaths will continue to occur. Strengthening healthcare infrastructure, investing in neonatal and paediatric care, and addressing socioeconomic disparities will be key to achieving sustainable improvements in child survival rates across Africa (Sharrow et al., 2022; WHO, 2024c).

2.1.3 End the epidemics of aids, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, waterborne diseases and other communicable diseases

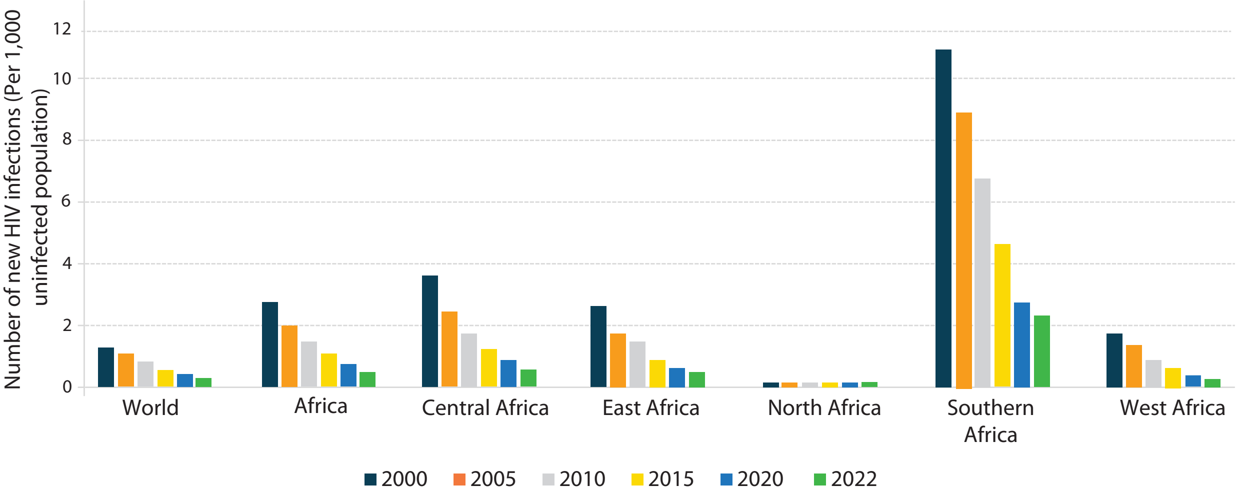
Table 2.4: SDG Target 3.3 and Indicators 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.3.4, and 3.3.5 and related targets and indicators in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 3.3: By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, waterborne diseases and other communicable diseases Indicator 3.3.1: Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations Indicator 3.3.2: Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population Indicator 3.3.3: Malaria incidence per 1,000 population Indicator 3.3.4: Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population Indicator 3.3.5: Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases	Target 6.2.4: Reduce the incidence of new HIV infections by 10% and increase to 100% antiretroviral coverage among people living with HIV including children Indicator 63: Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 population Indicator 64: Percentage of eligible population with HIV having access to Anti-Retroviral Treatment Target 6.2.3: Reduce the incidence of malaria by 20%, respiratory infections for communicable disease by 50%, and other communicable diseases by 55%. Indicator 61: Malaria incidence per 1,000 per year Indicator 62: Incidence of TB per 100,000 population

Despite significant progress in eradicating communicable diseases, high disease incidence rates persist. At present, only North Africa appears to be in a position of achieving its targets for SDG 3.3.

Globally, significant progress has been made towards eradicating the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This is also true for Africa, which has seen the number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected people fall from 2.6 in 2000 to 0.51 in 2022, equivalent to an 80.4 percent drop (Figure 2.5). This progress has largely been attributed to widespread access to antiretroviral therapy and effective prevention strategies. However, the continent still accounts for a substantial proportion of global HIV cases, and disparities in access to treatment and prevention services persist.

Figure 2.5: Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population



Source: UNDESA/ UNECA

Progress in the fight against HIV has been fairly evenly distributed across the continent, with drops in HIV incidence between 2000 and 2022 being above the 80 percent mark for all subregions, with the exception of North Africa where it fell by 39.3 percent during this period. It should be noted that HIV incidence in North Africa has always been low (and below world averages), making it harder to register such large drops over time. Despite these gains, HIV incidence remains relatively high, especially in countries in Southern Africa, which currently account for the bulk of HIV infections in the region and globally.

Significant progress made eradicating tuberculosis both globally and in Africa.

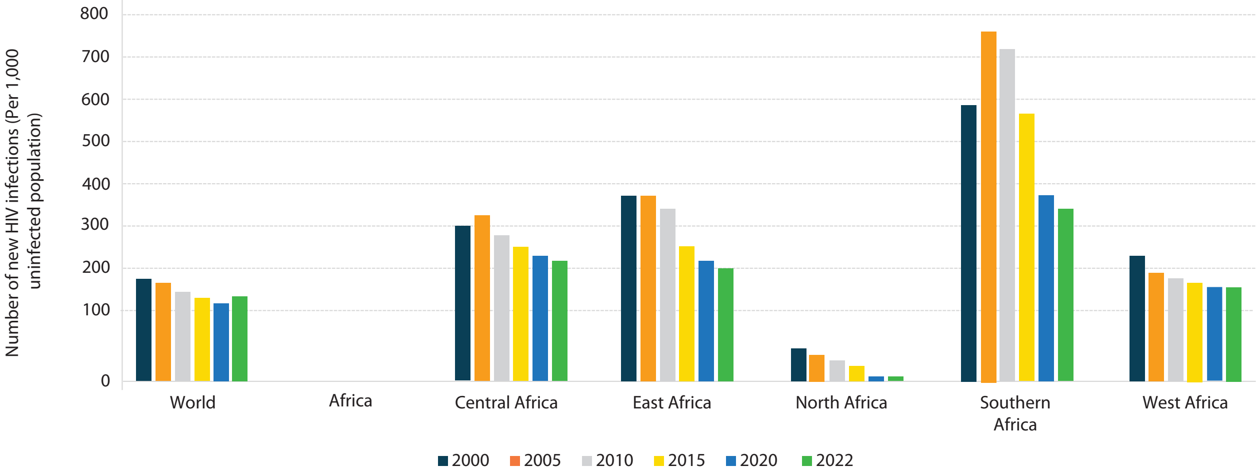
Similarly to HIV incidence, there has been significant progress in the eradication of tuberculosis both globally and in Africa (see Figure 2.6). Between 2000 and 2022, the incidence of tuberculosis per 100,000 people declined by 36.9 percent in Africa, from 289 in 2000 to 183 cases in 2022. Globally, incidences declined by 26.1 percent over the same period. According to WHO (2024), Africa continues to shoulder the high burden of tuberculosis with the disease remaining one of the leading causes of mortality. In 2022 alone, 2.5 million Africans accounted for 25 percent of global tuberculosis infections (WHO, 2025). Overall, efforts to improve detection, treatment and prevention have made progress, yet challenges remain, including drug-resistant tuberculosis strains and co-infection with HIV, which complicate control measures (WHO Regional Office for Africa, 2024).

Considerable progress made in eradicating malaria on the continent

Since 2000, there has been considerable progress towards the eradication of malaria in the African continent. However, Africa continues to disproportionally bear the burden of malaria. According to WHO (2025), Africa is home to 94 percent of the people infected with malaria globally in 2023 (246 million) and 95 percent of malaria deaths. Moreover, despite gains made in this area, malaria remains endemic in many parts of the continent.

For Africa as a whole, malaria incidence has dropped from 303.1 people contracting malaria per 1,000 population at risk in 2000 to 188.36 in 2022, equivalent to a 37.96

Figure 2.6: Tuberculosis Incidence (per 100,000)

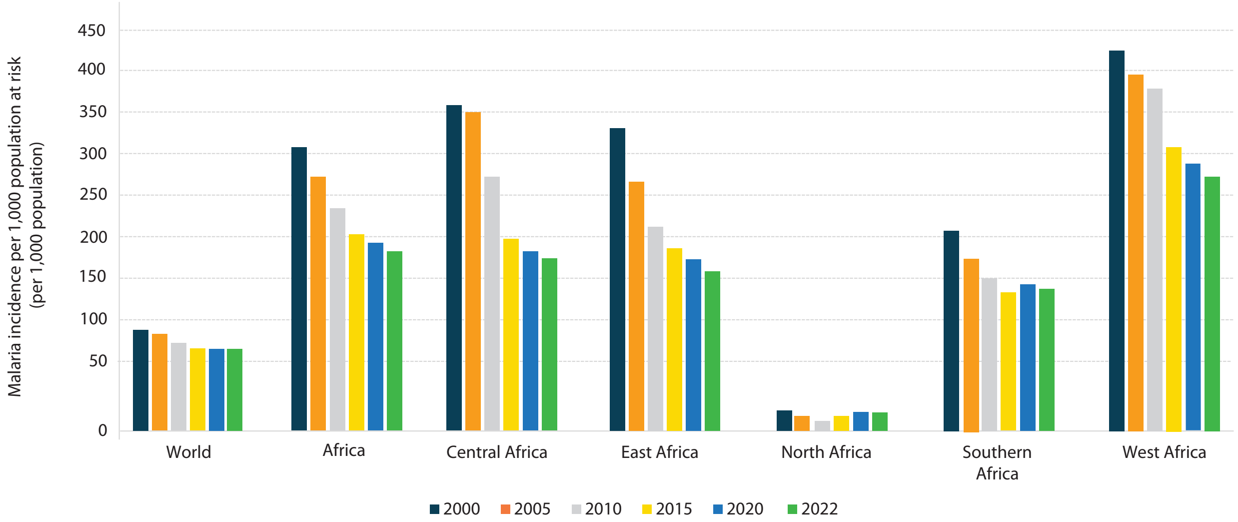


Source: UNDESA

percent reduction during this period. This drop was particularly significant in East Africa, where malaria incidence fell by 52.4 percent during this period. Of all subregions in the continent, North Africa has by far the fewest number of malaria cases per 1,000 people at risk, at 15.1 in 2022. These numbers are sufficiently low for North Africa to be able to eliminate malaria by 2030. However, for all other subregions, malaria incidence remains high, with Southern African reporting the lowest incidence, at 141.2 in 2022. Unless there is a significant change in trends, these other Africa subregions are unlikely to meet their SDG target for malaria incidence by 2030 (see Figure 2.7).

WHO (2005) attributes progress in the fight to eradicate malaria on the continent to interventions such as insecticide-treated nets, indoor residual spraying, and effective antimalarial medications. Malaria vaccinations are a new step forward in the fight against malaria (see Box 2.2 below for the case of Nigeria). However, emerging insecticide and

Figure 2.7: Malaria Incidence per 1,000 population at risk



Source: UNDESA

drug resistance pose threats to ongoing control efforts.

Notable decline in the prevalence of hepatitis B globally and on the continent

The prevalence of hepatitis B declined between 2015 and 2020 for both Africa and the world as a whole. However, this progress has been somewhat uneven on the continent. North Africa saw a sharp decline in the incidence of hepatitis B between 2015 and 2020 of 62.6 percent, down to 0.39 percent, leaving it well placed to achieve its SDG target of fully eradicating the hepatitis B by 2030. This decline was also fairly significant in East Africa (34.3 percent) and, to a lesser extent, in West Africa (16.6 percent) and in Southern Africa (15.5 percent). However, it increased in Central Africa during this same period by 51.4 percent (see Figure 2.8).

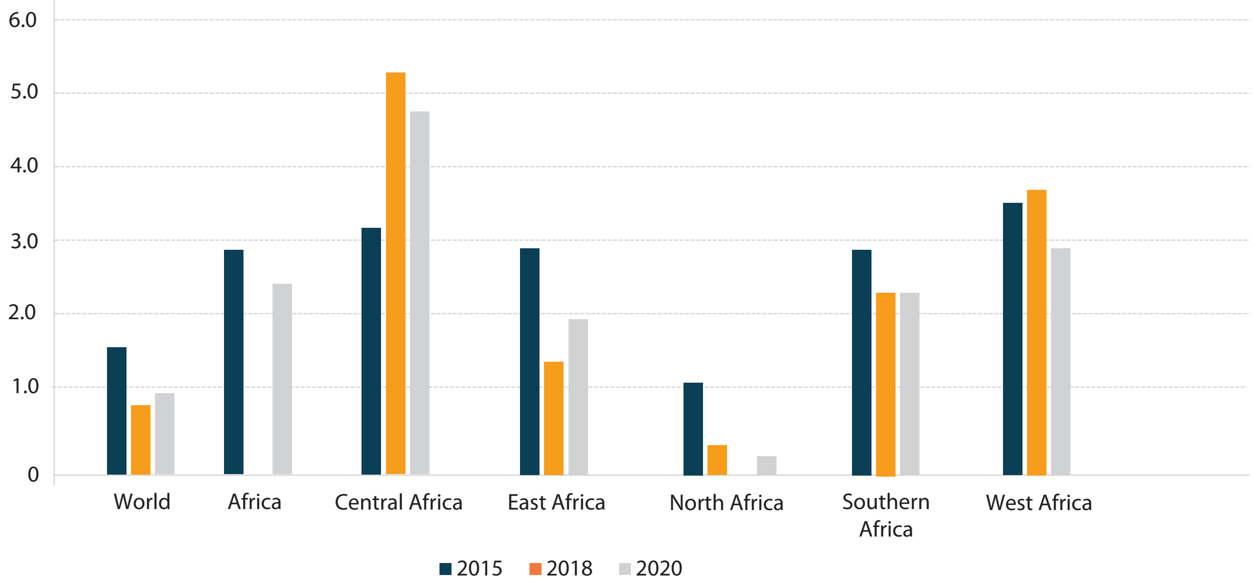
Notable decline in the number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases

Box 2.2: Malaria vaccine roll out in Nigeria

Nigeria has intensified its fight against malaria through key interventions such as the distribution of Long-Lasting Insecticide-Treated Nets (LLINs) and Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention (SMC). In a major step forward, the country introduced the RTS,S malaria vaccine into its routine immunization programme in 2024, targeting children under one year of age. The vaccine, which requires four doses, is initially being rolled out in the states of Kebbi and Bayelsa, regions with a high prevalence of malaria. Over 800,000 doses have been distributed during this initial phase with support from UNICEF, Gavi and WHO.

Source: Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria (2024)

Figure 2.8: Prevalence of hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) (%)



Source: UNDESA

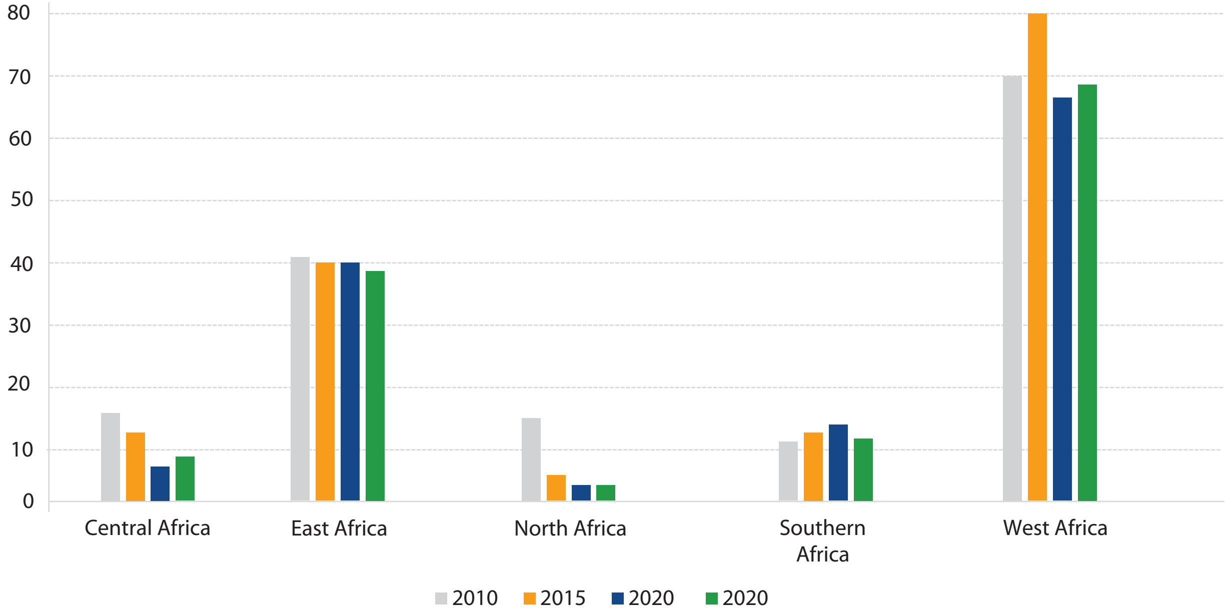
Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are a group of conditions caused by a variety of pathogens (including viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi and toxins) and are associated with devastating health, social and economic consequences. NTDs are mainly prevalent among impoverished people in tropical areas, although some have a much larger geographical distribution. According to WHO (2025), it is estimated that NTDs affect more than one billion people worldwide, while the number of people requiring NTD interventions (both preventive and curative) is 1.6 billion.

The number of people affected by NTDs in Africa has declined, from around 674 million people in 2010 to 597 million in 2022. However, NTDs continue to affect a sizeable share, over 40 percent, of the African population. Moreover, regions such as West Africa and Southern Africa have experienced an increase in the number of people requiring interventions against NTDs, although this increase could partly be the results of improvements in reporting and treatment (see Figure 2.9).

WHO (2024) indicates that the NTD road map of 2021–2030 seeks to reduce NTDs for 90 percent of the global population by 2030. However, as seen above, progress has been slow.

Despite progress, several challenges continue to hinder the achievement of SDG 3.3 in Africa. Weak health care infrastructure, inadequate funding and shortages of health care workers limit the capacity to diagnose, treat and prevent communicable diseases. Social determinants, including poverty, lack of education and limited healthcare access, further exacerbate health disparities. Political instability and conflict in some regions disrupt disease control programmes and weaken health systems. To accelerate progress, African countries must strengthen health systems by increasing investment in health care infrastructure, training and retaining health care workers and improving access to essential medicines and diagnostics.

Figure 2.9: Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases (in millions)



Source: UNDESA/UNECA

Expanding community-based health care services, enhancing public health surveillance and fostering cross-border collaboration are crucial to tackling communicable diseases effectively. Additionally, increasing funding from international partners and governments, promoting research and innovation and addressing the social determinants of health will be key to meeting the 2030 targets.

In summary, while Africa has made commendable strides in combating communicable diseases under SDG Target 3.3, the region continues to face substantial challenges. Sustained investment strengthened health systems and targeted interventions are crucial to accelerate progress and achieve the 2030 targets.

2.1.4 Reducing premature mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by one-third through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being

Table 2.5: SDG Target 3.4 and Indicators 3.4.1 and 3.4.2 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 3.4: By 2030, reduce by one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being Indicator 3.4.1: Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease Indicator 3.4.2: Suicide mortality rate	Not aligned

Premature mortality from NCDs has dropped in the African continent over the past two decades. However, significant variability is observable across the regions with regards to NCD incidence, with some countries being well placed to achieve their SDG targets for NCDs.

Premature mortality from NCDs is on the rise across the world, especially those relating to cancer and cardiovascular diseases. According to WHO, NCDs are collectively responsible for 74 percent of all deaths worldwide and 86 percent of these premature deaths happen in middle-income and low-income countries (see Box 2.3). Tobacco, physical inactivity, abuse of alcohol, unhealthy diets and pollution are some of the risk factors associated with NCDs. This epidemic poses a threat to humanity as well as health systems. Efforts to eliminate these diseases are, therefore, very critical.

Mortality rates attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory disease for people aged between 30 and 70 actually improved on average in the African continent between 2000 and

Box 2.3: Reducing the burden of NCDs in Africa

The burden of NCDs continues to grow due to risk factors such as poor diet, physical inactivity and pollution. WHO emphasizes that by 2030, NCDs will become the leading cause of death on the continent. To effectively combat NCDs in Africa, it is crucial to promote health education from an early age, in schools and in rural and urban communities. Awareness-raising campaigns on balanced diets, regular physical activity and reducing tobacco and alcohol consumption can play a key role in changing risky behaviours. In addition, one of the major challenges in Africa remains the weakness of health systems in the early diagnosis and ongoing management of NCDs. Many people are unaware of their condition until serious complications arise. It is recommended that systematic screening for NCDs be integrated into primary care by training medical staff, improving the availability of essential medicines and establishing patient follow-up registries.

In addition, health policies should encourage an integrated approach that combines the management of NCDs with that of infectious diseases, which are often prevalent on the continent. Most importantly, the fight against NCDs in Africa requires intersectoral policies involving agriculture, education, urban planning and public finance (AUDA-NEPAD, 2022).[1] Tax measures can be introduced to discourage the consumption of harmful products, such as taxing sugary drinks, banning advertising of tobacco and ultra-processed foods, and regulating the sale of alcohol. At the same time, policies must encourage the local production of healthy foods, access to public spaces for physical activity and urban planning that promotes active mobility. By aligning public health objectives with sustainable development, Africa can slow the progression of NCDs and improve the quality of life of its populations.

Source: Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria (2024)

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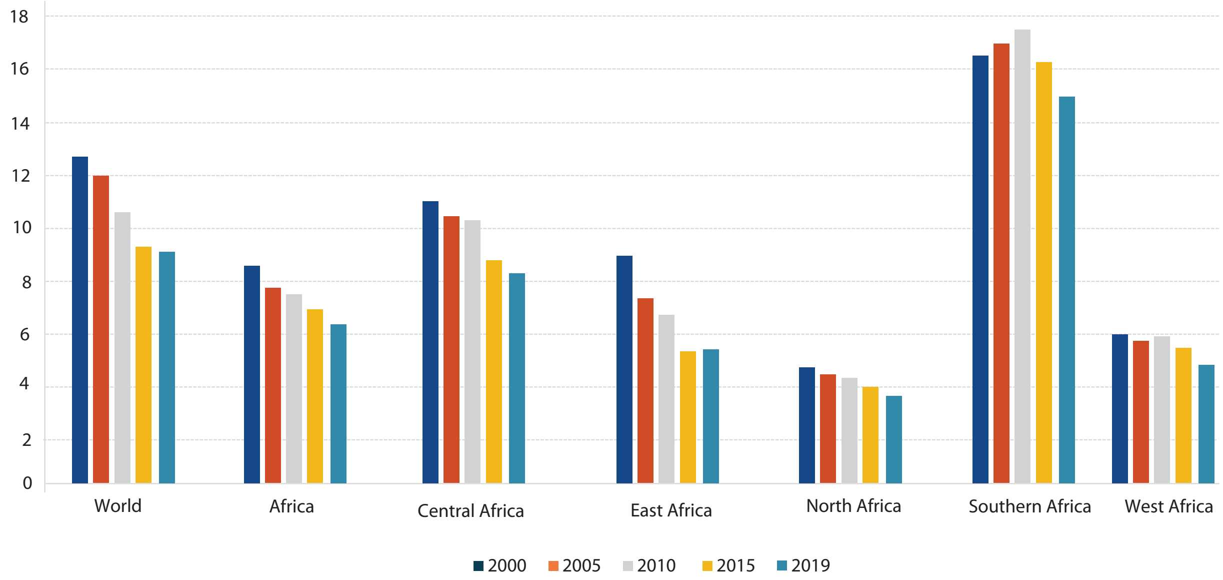
[1] https://www.nepad.org/blog/combating-non-communicable-diseases-africa-using-smart-technology

2019, according to the most recent data from UNECA, falling on average by 13.2 percent during this period for countries in the region. Moreover, these improvements have benefited people from both sexes, although they have been slightly higher for men (13.9 percent drop) than for women (11.9 percent). However, these figures mask considerable country variability, although most countries in the continent have seen these rates drop.

Suicide mortality rate has dropped across all subregions in Africa in the past decade

In line with global trends, suicide mortality declined in Africa during the past decade, with drops being reported in all subregions. Progress has been particularly significant in East and Central Africa, with the suicide mortality rate dropping by 36.4 percent and 28.0 percent, respectively between 2000 and 2019. Southern Africa, which has the highest suicide rate on the continent (at 14.79 suicide deaths per 100,000 people in 2019, as opposed to a continental rate of 6.47), also reported the smallest drop (10.9 percent) in suicide incidence (see Figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10: Suicide mortality rate (deaths per 100,000 population)



Source: UNDESA

2.1.5 Strengthening the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol

Table 2.6: SDG Target 3.5 and Indicators 3.5.1 and 3.5.2 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 3.5: Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol Indicator 3.5.1: Coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorders Indicator: 3.5.2: Alcohol per capita consumption (aged 15 years and older) within a calendar year in litres of pure alcohol	Not aligned

Most countries in the region have enacted legislation or regulations to reduce alcohol use. However, these are not uniformly enforced. Moreover, following the COVID-19 pandemic there was an increase in online sales and home delivery of alcohol, making it harder to enforce alcohol-related regulations.

The African region faces significant gaps in substance use disorder treatment services, with the WHO service capacity index for SUD treatment scoring only 25.1 for Africa compared to 48.7 for Europe (WHO, 2024) – the lowest among all regions globally. The fragmented data available from nine African countries across different years reveals stark disparities: 2017 saw the most complete reporting, with seven countries documenting treatment coverage rates. Angola reported the highest coverage (9.23 percent), while Madagascar showed the lowest (0.37

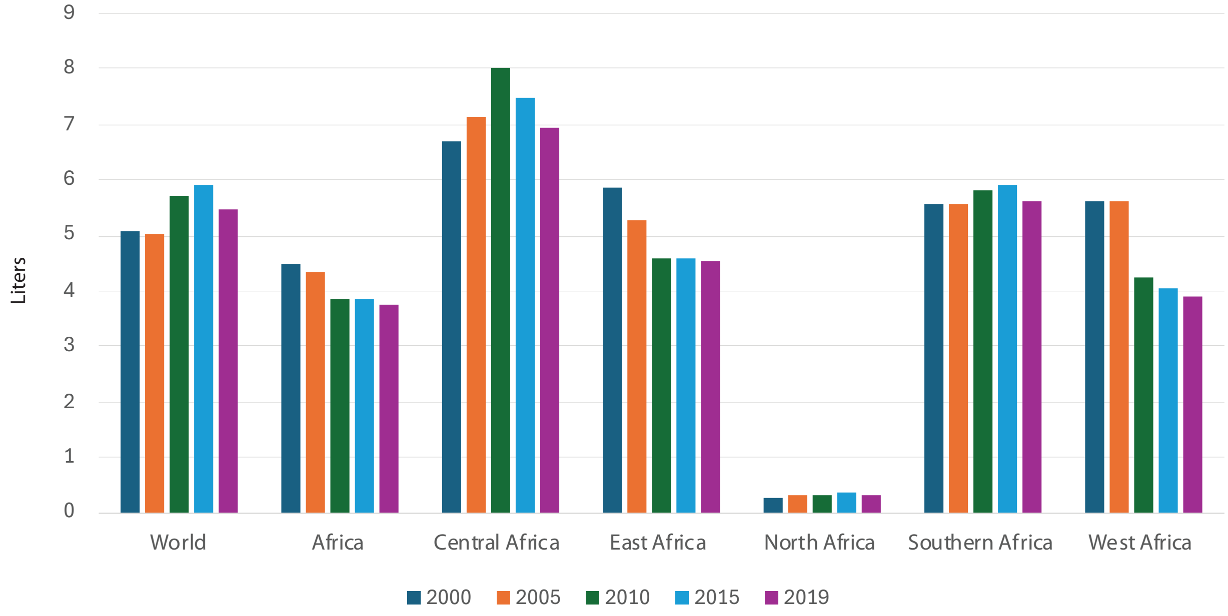
percent). No systematic national data exists for other African countries.

Observed significant reduction in alcohol consumption, with the biggest reductions reported in West and East Africa.
The most recent available data points to a significant reduction in alcohol consumption in the African continent, from 4.50 litres of pure alcohol per capita in 2000 to 3.77 in 2019, equivalent to a 16.3 percent reduction. These figures are significantly lower than other regions in the world, such as Latin American and the Caribbean (6.17 litres per capita), OECD countries (8.6) or the world as a whole, which reported 5.36 litres per capita of alcohol consumption in 2019.

However, these figures hide considerable variation by subregion. Alcohol consumption is close to zero in North Africa, at 0.35 litres per capita in 2019, whereas it is at world average levels in Southern Africa at 5.75 litres per capita in 2019. Trends are also fairly disparate by subregion. Alcohol consumption has actually increased in North Africa in the past decades, by 20.8 percent between 2000 and 2019, albeit starting from a very low base. On the other hand, West and East Africa experienced sharp reductions in alcohol consumption of 30.6 percent and 22.2 percent, respectively, over that same period. Alcohol consumption is also significantly lower among women than among men, and this is true for all subregion, with women consuming anywhere between a quarter and a tenth of the quantities men consume (see Figure 2.11).

In terms of measures to reduce the consumption of alcohol in the African continent, WHO reports that, as of 2023, up to 35 of the 47 Member States in the region had legislation or regulations to limit the off-premises purchase of alcohol. Another 37 had laws or regulations to limit the age for on-premise services. However, it also found that these laws and regulations are not uniformly enforced. Moreover, since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in online sales and home delivery of alcohol, making it harder to enforce alcohol-

Figure 2.11: Alcohol consumption per capita (aged 15 years and older) in a calendar year (litres of pure alcohol)



Source: UNDESA (2024)

related regulations. Countries in the region also face challenges with the introduction of punitive drink-driving countermeasures, with only 25 of the 47 Member States carrying out random roadside blood alcohol testing, and only 12 having specified legal blood alcohol concentration limits below the recommended 0.05 percent (WHO, 2023a).

This same WHO report (WHO, 2023a) identified a number of common challenges affecting countries in the region in their ability to further reduce alcohol consumption. These include lack of policies on drug and alcohol control and lack of intersectoral coordination, limited and very weak regulations on where and to whom alcohol can be sold, high cost of private alcohol rehabilitation treatment, illegal and informal brewing, distilling and sale of alcohol, interference by the alcohol industry and increasing drug trafficking, growing and distribution.

2.1.6 Halving the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents

Table 2.7: SDG Target 3.6 and Indicator 3.6.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 3.6: By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents	Target 6.2.5: Reduce the death rate from traffic accidents by 50%
Indicator 3.6.1: Death rate due to road traffic injuries	Indicator 65: Number of deaths from traffic accidents

Road traffic deaths remain alarmingly high across all African subregions, with Southern and West Africa showing the highest rates

Road traffic accidents remain a leading cause of death and disability worldwide, particularly affecting vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists. The indicator helps assess progress in implementing road safety measures, including improved infrastructure, enforcement of traffic laws, and promotion of safer transport systems.

The estimated road traffic death rate in 2021 in Africa was significantly higher than the global average, with all African subregions exceeding the world average of 15.02 deaths per 100,000 population. Southern Africa (21.06) and West Africa (20.44) have the highest rates, followed by East Africa (18.40). Only North Africa (15.02) has a rate similar to the world average. However, it is not possible to determine whether there has been an improvement in the region nor to assess the likelihood of achieving the SDG target of halving the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2030, due to the absence of data prior to 2021 for this indicator (see Figure 2.12).

Efforts to improve road safety on the continent, including the adoption of the African Road Safety Action Plan and the African Road Safety Charter have been taken and are reinforced by global initiatives such as the United Nations Second Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021–2030)

Figure 2.12:

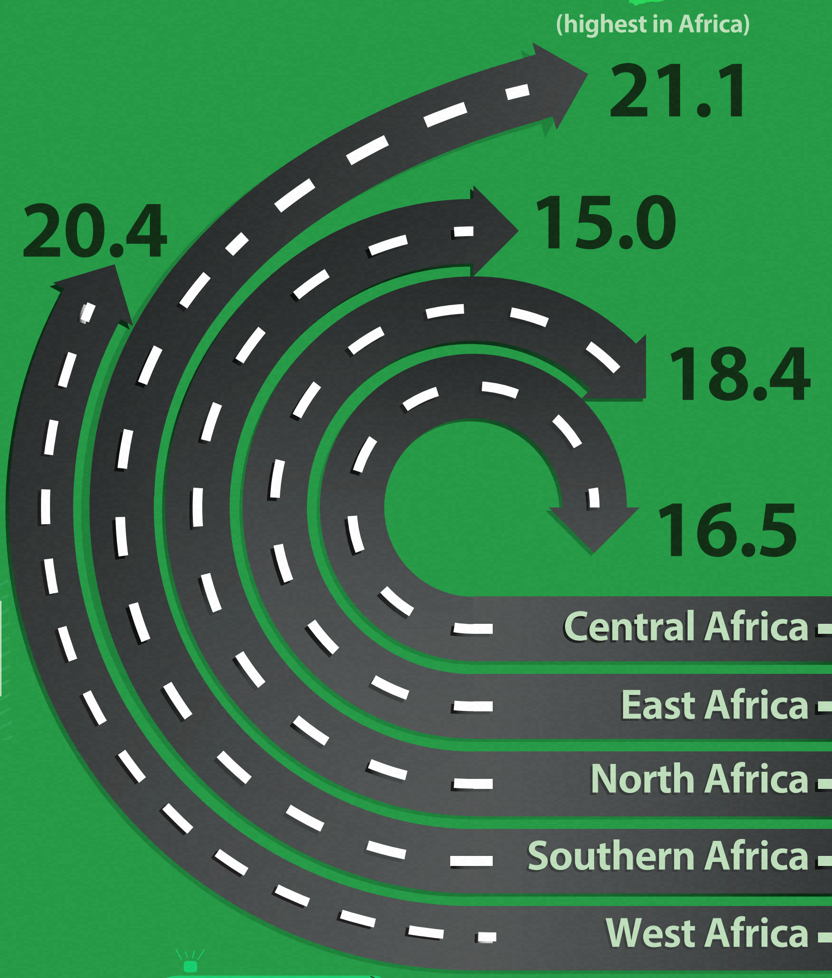
Road traffic death rate

(per 100,000 population, 2021)

Africa (Overall) Death Rate 18.7 is

24.7%

higher than the **global rate.**



Southern Africa

(21.1) has the highest regional rate, exceeding the global average by

40.7%

North Africa

has the lowest regional rate (15.0)

World Average

15.0

The African Union (AU), with support from ECA and other institutions, has adopted the African Road Safety Action plan rooted in the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020. The Decade complements the adoption of the African Road Safety Charter, currently ratified by 13 African countries with two ratifications remaining to come into force, and the norms and standards of the Trans African Highway network prioritizing road safety.

In addition to this AU initiative, In September 2020, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/74/299 "Improving global road safety", proclaiming a Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030. The Global Action plan was launched in October 2021. The second Decade started with intense activities on the African continent with the support of partners. It focused on road safety management (legislation, regulation, national strategy, action plan, etc.), used cars and post-crash care.

2.1.7 Ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including for family planning, information and education and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes

Table 2.8: SDG Target 3.7 and Indicators 3.7.1 and 3.7.2 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 3.7: By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including for family planning, information and education and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes Indicator 3.7.1: Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods Indicator 3.7.2: Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group	Not aligned

African countries have expanded sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services, leading to reductions in unmet family planning needs, increased contraceptive use, and a decline in child marriage, although access remains uneven

SRHRs encompass the right to a safe and satisfying sex life and the freedom to decide if, when, and how often to have children. Since the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), African governments and institutions have supported SRHR interventions across individuals' life courses. The AUC 2006 Continental Policy Framework and the revised Maputo Plan of Action (2016–2030) aim to integrate SRHRs into primary health care and achieve universal access to services. Progress since 2015 includes reduced unmet family planning needs, increased contraceptive use, and a decline in child marriage, although challenges such as early pregnancies persist.

Despite improvements, Africa's adolescent fertility rate remains nearly double the global average, and comprehensive HIV/

AIDS knowledge among youth is low. Comprehensive sexuality education is vital for improving health, reducing HIV transmission, and preventing unintended pregnancies, yet most African countries score below 60 on the Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child Health-Universal Health Coverage subindex, indicating ongoing gaps in SRHR access and policy implementation.

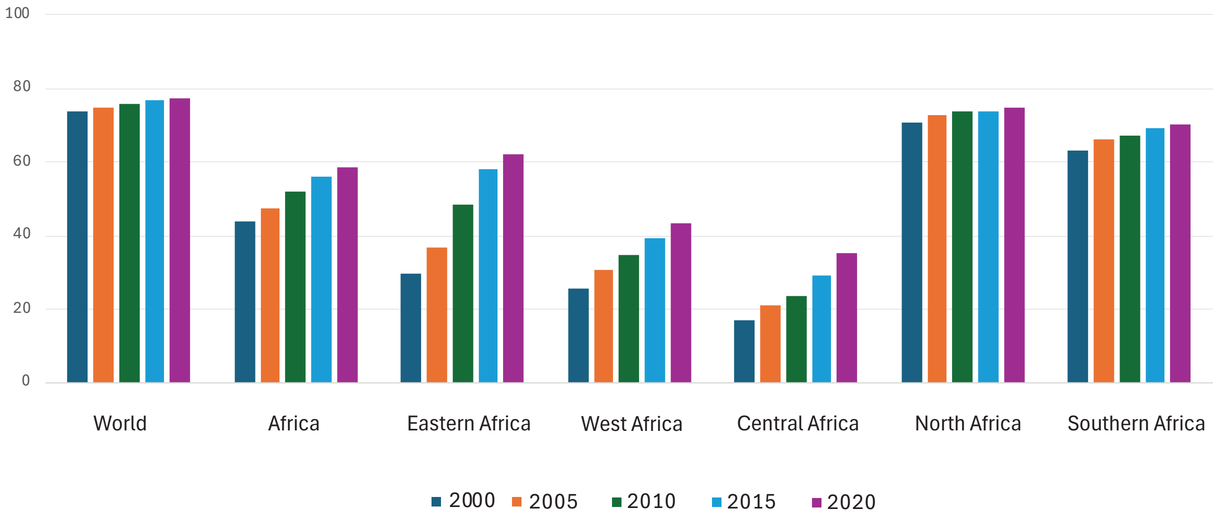
In terms of women of reproductive age with access to birth control, Africa's average (60.5 percent) is well below the world average (77.6 percent). Across subregions, there is significant heterogeneity in Africa. North and Southern Africa show performance slightly below the world average, with 75.4 percent and 71.2 percent, respectively, while Central Africa has the lowest performance, with only 38.3 percent of women having access to birth control (see Figure 2.13).

Despite progress, Africa's adolescent fertility rate remains a major concern, with the 2023 rate for 15–19-year-olds (89.3 per 1,000) being more than double the global average

Regarding the adolescent birth rate, both indicators—measured as the adolescent birth rate per 1,000 women aged 10-14 years and 15-19 years—show similar trends. The continent has shown improvement over the last 20 years. However, compared with the global average, the situation in Africa remains significantly worse. For instance, in 2023, the adolescent birth rate for women aged 15-19 was more than double in Africa (89.3) compared to the global average (41.3).

At the subregional level, North Africa is the only region that exhibits birth rates similar to the world average. While all regions have shown consistent improvement, progress has been uneven. Notably, the indicator for the youngest age group (10-14 years) has experienced the greatest improvement. For example, West Africa had the highest birth rate among women aged 10-14 years in 2000 (10.2), but it saw a significant reduction of 56.7 percent, reaching 4.4 in 2023, lower than Central Africa (5.4) and Southern Africa (5.3) (see Figure 2.14).

Figure 2.13: Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15–49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods



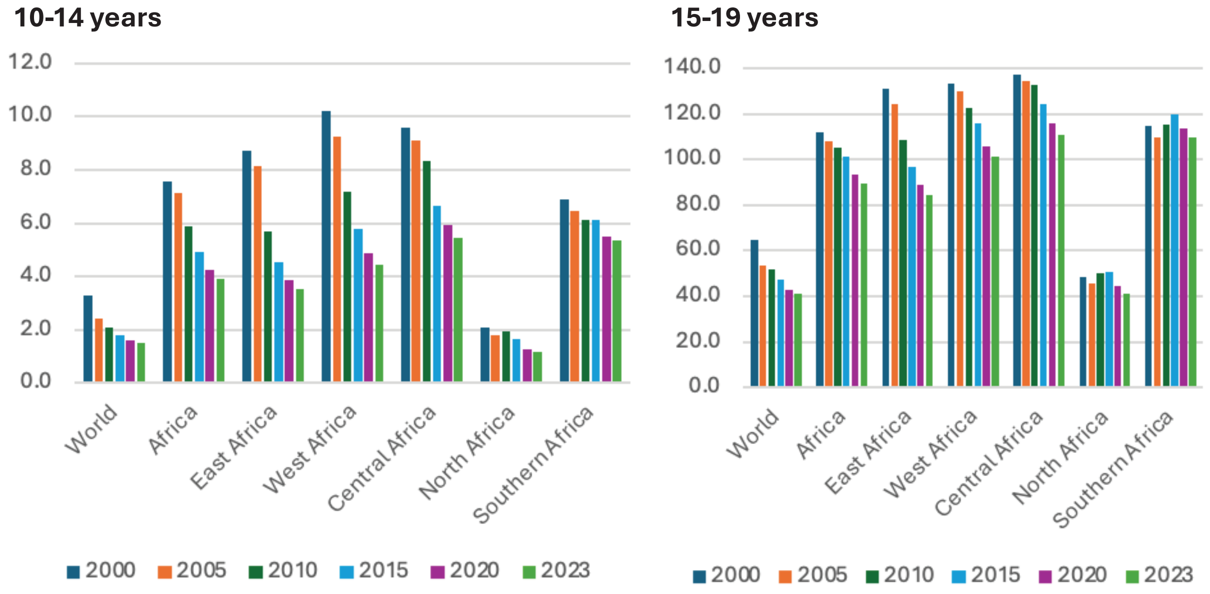
Source: ACS / UNDESA (World Average)

2.1.8 Achieving universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all

Table 2.9: SDG Target 3.8 and Indicators 3.8.1 and 3.8.2 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all Indicator 3.8.1: Coverage of essential health services Indicator 3.8.2: Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health as a share of total household expenditure or income	Target 6.2.1: Increase access to quality basic health care systems and services to at least 40% Indicator 57: Proportion of the population with access to quality basic health care systems and services

Figure 2.14: Adolescent birth rate per 1,000 women



10-14 years

15-19 years

Source: ACS / UNDESA (world average)

Significant progress has been made in African countries in terms of achieving universal health coverage over the past 20 years. However, they still lag far behind more developed countries. In 2000, Africa had a much lower universal health coverage (UHC) rate (27 percent) than the world as a whole (45 percent) but it has since experienced higher relative growth in coverage (74.1 percent) than the global average (51.1 percent). Within Africa, East Africa saw the most significant improvements (115.8 percent), followed by West Africa

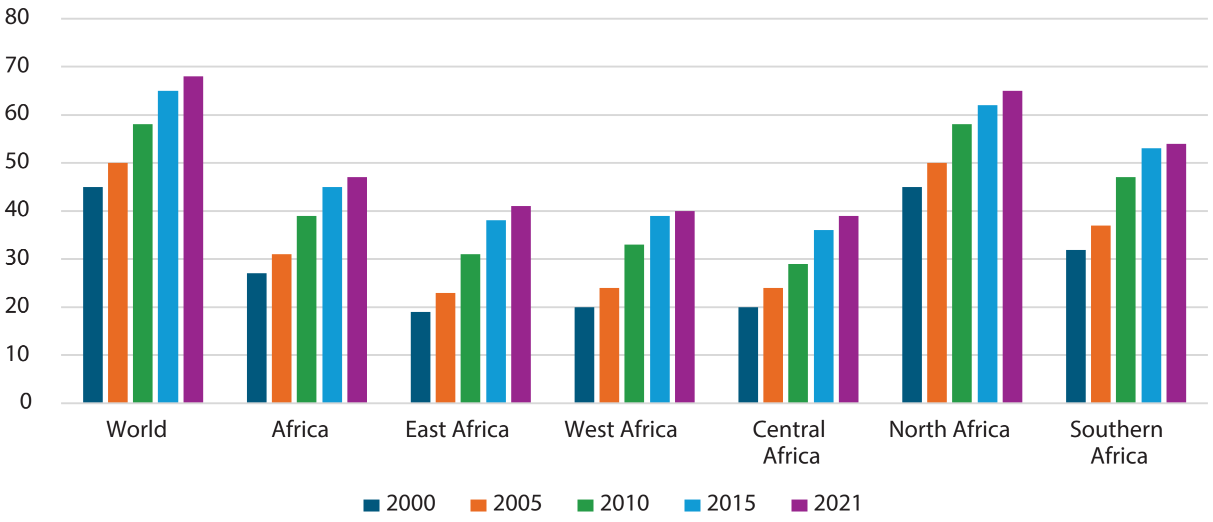
(100 percent) and Central Africa (95 percent). North Africa had the highest initial coverage rate (45 percent in 2000) but the slowest growth (44.4 percent) (see Figure 2.15).

Several factors explain the disparities that exist in UHC in Africa, including inadequate infrastructure, economic constraints, conflict and instability, and weak data-collection systems. Countries with low coverage often have under-resourced public services, insufficient healthcare personnel, and poor accessibility in rural areas. Additionally, political unrest and climate-related crises increase vulnerabilities in regions facing high maternal mortality, low educational attainment, and limited access to clean water and sanitation. In spite of these constraints, countries are investing in public health services (see the case of Benin) and rural health expansion programmes (see the case of Ethiopia) to improve public health outcomes (See Box 2.4).

Considerable disparities in household expenditure on health service ranging from good coverage – with citizens spending close to zero out-of-pocket – and others seeing households spending more than 30 percent of their total income on health.

A significant share of the population in countries such as Angola (35.5 percent), Egypt (31.1 percent), and Tunisia (16.7 percent) face health expenditures exceeding 10 percent of household income, highlighting persistent vulnerabilities in health financing systems and the need for stronger financial protection. When considering the more severe threshold of health expenditure exceeding 25 percent of household income, countries such as Angola (12.5 percent), Zimbabwe (7 percent), and Egypt (6.1 percent) continue to show substantial portions of their populations incurring catastrophic health costs, underscoring deep inequities and limited access to universal health coverage. In contrast, countries such as Rwanda, the Gambia, and Zambia report very low proportions of household income being spent on health. Data gaps remain a major challenge, making regional comparisons and temporal analyses difficult.

Figure 2.15: Universal health coverage (UHC)



Source: ACS / UNDESA

Box 2.4: Improving health care through investment in public health facilities

The Centre Hospitalier International de Calavi (CHIC) is a flagship example of the commitment of Benin to strengthening its healthcare infrastructure. Located in Abomey-Calavi, this multidisciplinary public hospital, with a capacity of 436 beds, is designed to become a national and international benchmark. It offers high-quality care across 18 medical specialties, organized into eight departments. Equipped with state-of-the-art medical technology, including advanced imaging services and radiotherapy facilities, the CHIC aims to reduce the need for medical evacuations by providing comprehensive treatment for complex conditions.

Source: Government of Benin (2025)

2.1.9 Substantially reducing the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination

Table 2.10: SDG Target 3.9 and Indicators 3.9.1, 3.9.2 and 3.9.3 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 3.9: By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination Indicator 3.9.1: Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution Indicator 3.9.2: Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) services) Indicator 3.9.3: Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning	Not aligned

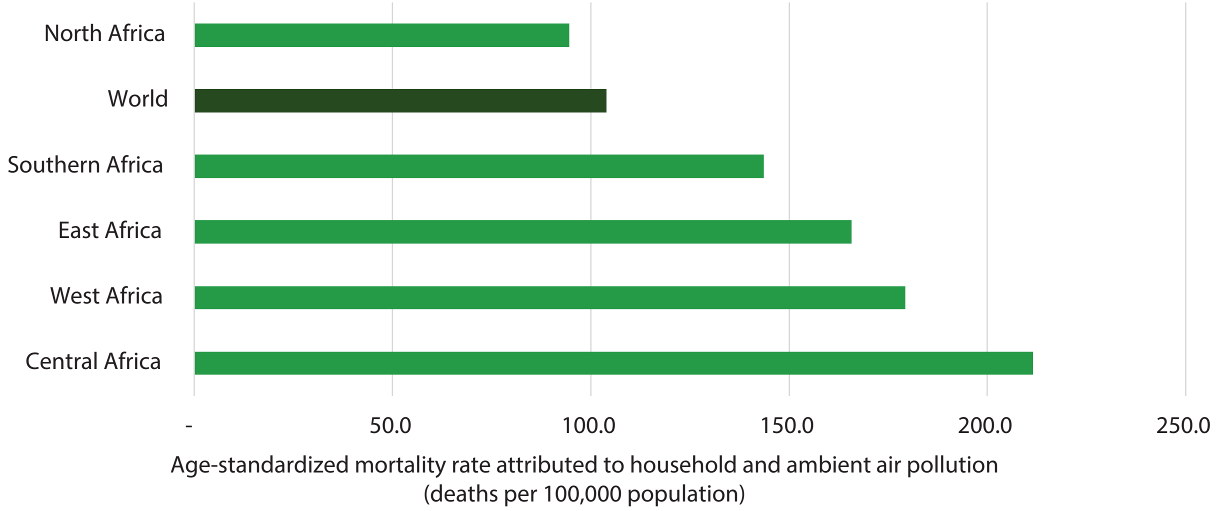
Most regions face higher-than-global mortality rates from air pollution, unsafe water/sanitation and poisoning, with Central and West Africa being the most affected

In 2019, mortality rates from air pollution in Africa were significantly higher than the global average of 104 deaths per 100,000 people. Central Africa faced the highest burden, with 211.5 deaths per 100,000, followed by West Africa (179.3), East Africa (165.8), and Southern Africa (143.6). These figures reflect a widespread and severe public health challenges across most of the continent. North Africa was the only subregion with a lower rate (94.6), falling below the global average (see Figure 1.16).

North Africa performs better than both the African average and global rates, indicating regional disparities in health and environmental conditions.

In 2019, mortality rates due to unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH-related diseases) were significantly higher in most African regions compared to the global average of 18.2 deaths per 100,000 population. Central Africa (62.9) and West Africa (61.4) had the highest mortality rates, more than three times the world average,

Figure 2.16: Mortality rates (deaths per 100,000 population) due to household and ambient air pollution



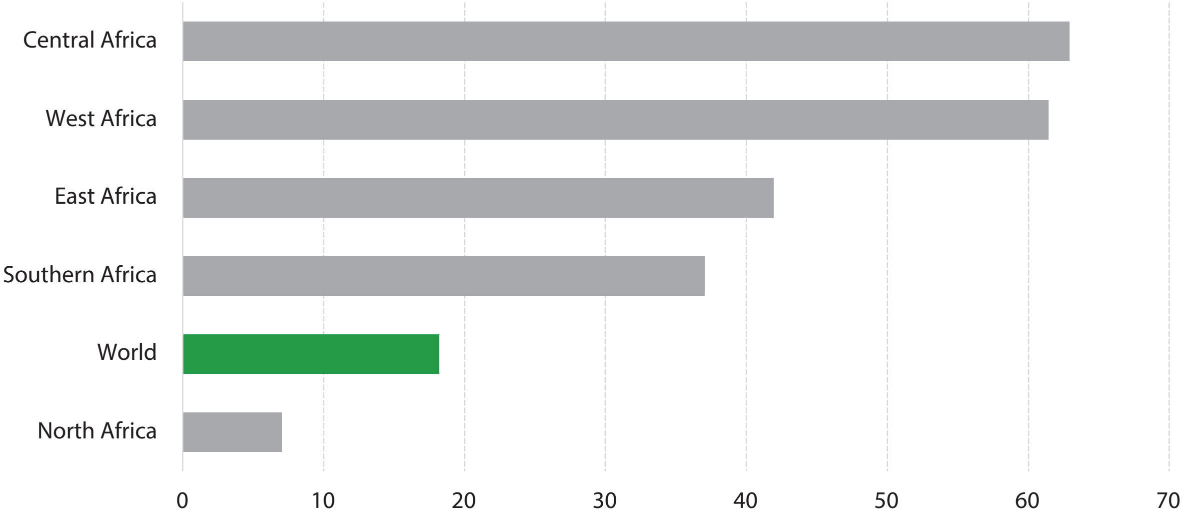
Source: UNDESA

followed by East Africa (41.9) and Southern Africa (37.0). North Africa (7.0), however, had a much lower rate, well below the global average. These disparities highlight the urgent need for improved access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene services across Africa (see Figure 2.17).

Significantly high unintentional poisonings in Africa compared to global averages

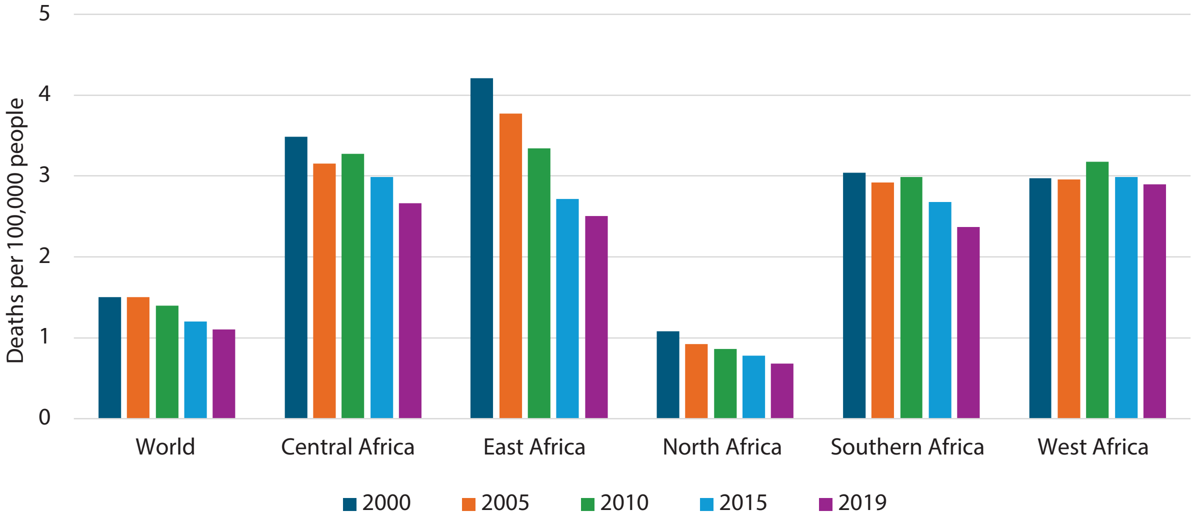
In 2019, mortality rates due to unintentional poisonings remained significantly higher across most African subregions compared to the global average of 1.1 deaths per 100,000 population. West Africa had the highest rate at 2.9, followed by Central Africa (2.7), East Africa (2.5), and Southern Africa (2.4). North Africa was the only subregion with a lower rate (0.7), falling below the global average. Despite progress in reducing these deaths, the persistently high rates in the continent highlight the need for stronger safety regulations, increased public awareness and improved access to medical care to prevent poisoning-related fatalities (see Figure 2.18).

Figure 2.17: Mortality rate due to unsafe water, unsafe, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) (deaths per 100,000 population, 2019)



Source: UNDESA

Figure 2.18: Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisonings, by sex (deaths per 100,000 population)



Source: UNDESA

2.1.10 Strengthening the implementation of WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate

Table 2.11: SDG Target 3.a and Indicator 3.a.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 3.a: Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate Indicator 3.a.1: Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older	Not aligned

Tobacco use among persons aged 15 and older has seen a sharp decline in the African continent, following the introduction of a variety of price, taxation, advocacy and regulatory measures by governments across the continent towards reducing tobacco use

Tobacco use poses significant threats to the health and well-being of every society. Tobacco kills half of its users and smokers face a higher risk of severe disease (WHO, 2022). To tackle the harmful impact of tobacco, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) was adopted by Member States in 2003. The WHO FCTC is an internationally negotiated, legally binding package of evidence-based measures proven to reduce the damage caused by tobacco. SDG 3 Target 3.a calls for strengthening the implementation of the WHO FCTC.

Tobacco use among people aged 15 and above has seen a sharp decline in the African continent, dropping from 18.9 percent of the population in this age bracket in 2000, to 11.3 percent in 2022, representing a drop of 39.9 percent. While the drop has been somewhat less marked than in other parts of the world (such as 55.2 percent in Southeast Asia and 49.2 percent in South America) this likely owes to the fact the Africa has the lowest rates of tobacco use in the world, making it harder to achieve significant reductions over time than in other regions (see Figure 2.19).

This drop in tobacco use in the African continent has been persistent over time during the past two decades. However, it has been more marked among African women than African men, at 64.2 percent and 28.5 percent, respectively. There are also important subregional variations in the continent. Tobacco use dropped significantly in West Africa, at by 76.7 percent between 2000 and 2022. It has also dropped, although less intensely, in Central, East and Southern Africa: by 33.6 percent, 27 percent and 20.6 percent, respectively. In contrast, tobacco use increased in North Africa by 1.1 percent between 2000 and 2022, driven by an increase in tobacco use by men in that region of 3.3 percent, with female tobacco use in North Africa actually dropping very significantly by 66.7 percent over this same period.

Countries in the African continent have taken actions towards reducing tobacco use. According to WHO (2022)[1] 16 countries

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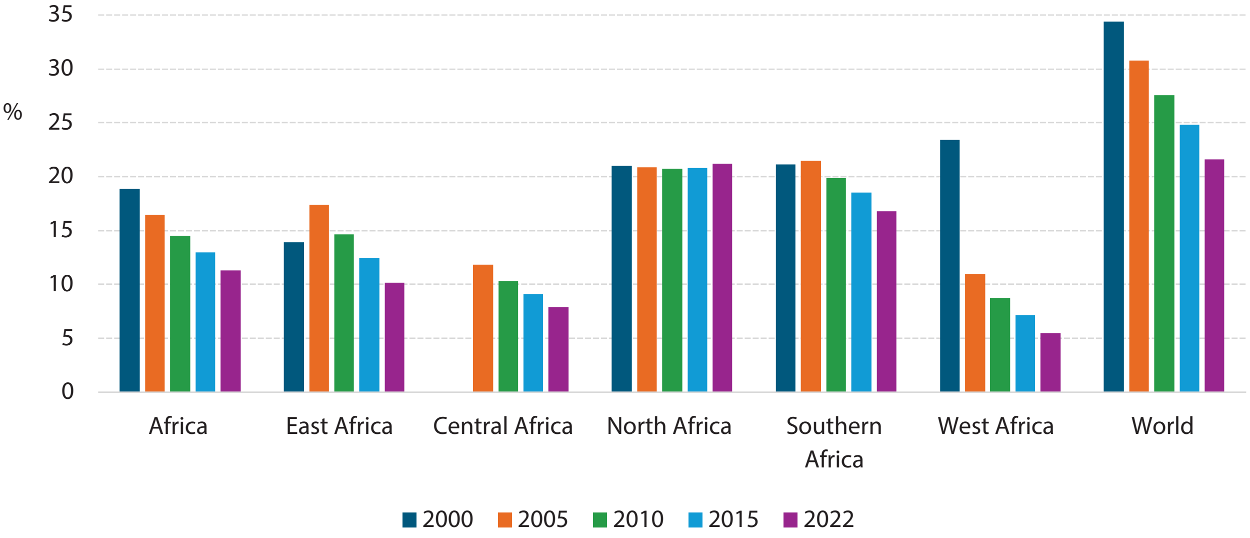
[1] It is important to note that the WHO regional grouping does not include Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan and Somalia as part of its Africa region, but in the Eastern Mediterranean group of member states.

Figure 2.19: Age-standardized prevalence of tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and above, by sex (%)



Source: UNDESA

have developed and implemented multi-sectoral tobacco control strategic plans which are aligned with the WHO FCTC. Twenty-two have improved tax and price measures through policy reform. Thirty-six have tobacco control laws and regulations in force, and 15 have introduced large graphic health warnings about tobacco harm. Civil society organizations are also increasingly active in supporting tobacco control. However, WHO (2022) also warns that tobacco industry interference has remained a significant challenge for tobacco control in the region. Several countries in the region have reported cases of interference, including litigation against tobacco control laws and regulations in Burkina Faso, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda (WHO, 2022).

2.1.11 Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases and provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and public health.

Table 2.12: SDG Target 3.b and Indicators 3.b.1, 3.b.2 and 3.b.3 and related target and indicator of Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 3.b: Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all	Target 6.2.1: Increase access to quality basic health care systems and services to at least 40%; Indicator 57: Proportion of the population with access to quality basic health care systems and services

Table 2.12: *continued*

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Indicator 3.b.1: Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in their national programme Indicator 3.b.2: Total net official development assistance to medical research and basic health sectors Indicator 3.b.3: Proportion of health facilities that have a core set of relevant essential medicines available and affordable on a sustainable basis	

Significant improvements observed in vaccine coverage, especially for those diseases for which vaccine coverage was traditionally low, such as for pneumococcal disease, measles and human papillomavirus (HPV)

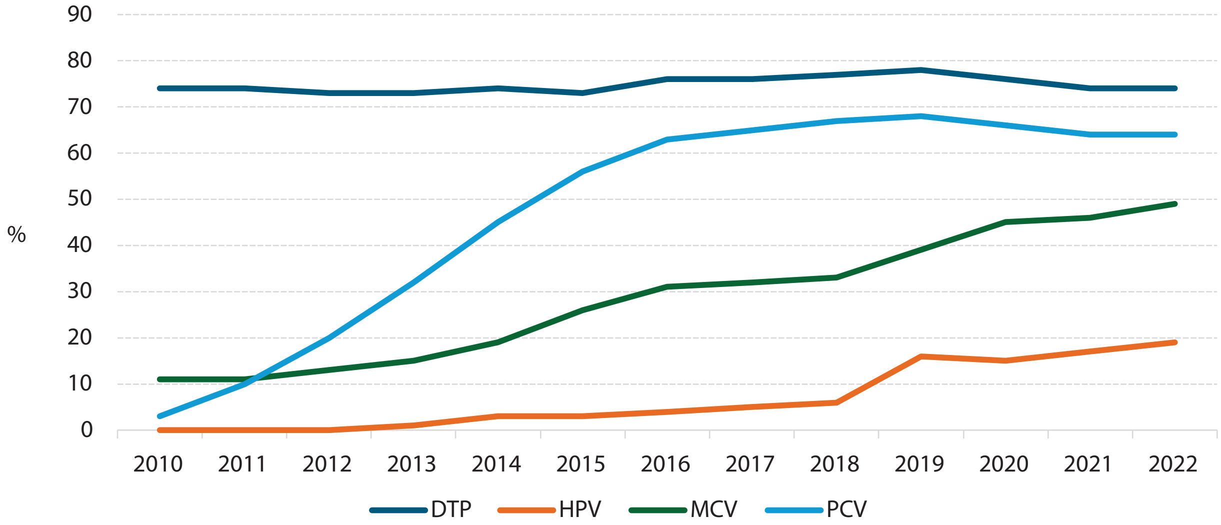
The continent has seen significant improvements in vaccine coverage, especially for those diseases for which vaccine coverage was traditionally low in the region, such as for pneumococcal disease, measles and human papillomavirus (HPV). For the first of these, coverage in Africa in 2022 stood at 64 percent of the target population, up from 3 percent in 2010. For measles, these figures were 49 percent and 11 percent, respectively, and for HPV, 19 percent and 0 percent. Vaccination for diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP), in contrast, stood at a high of 74 percent in 2022, the same proportion as in 2010 (see Figure 2.20).

While progress has been significant against these SDG indicators (3.b.1), these same proportions indicate there is still scope to continue increasing vaccination levels in the region. Moreover, as pointed out by WHO, these figures hide significant variation across countries in the region and are in many cases below global vaccination goals. For instance, only 13 countries in Africa had achieved the global target of 90 percent DTP coverage in 2022 and only two countries had achieved the global target of at least 90 percent of the target population receiving the second dose of the measles vaccine. HPV vaccination of girls in the region remains very low, at 19 percent. In the meantime, the number of zero-dose children in the African region rose to 7.7 million in 2022, up from 6.2 million children in 2019 (WHO Regional Office for Africa, 2023b).

Total net official development assistance for medical research and basic health sectors more than doubled in real terms during the last decade

Africa has seen the total net ODA for medical research and basic health sectors that it receives more than double in real terms over the last decade, from US$ 3.1 billion in 2010 (in 2022 US$ equivalent), to US$ 6.7 billion in 2022. It remains, in this regard, the largest recipient region in the world, accounting for 33.16 percent of global ODA reserved for these purposes. The lion's share of this ODA went East Africa, which accounted for 45.5 percent of ODA for medical research and basic health in the African continent in 2022, followed by West Africa (31.5 percent) and the central African subregion (17.2 percent).

Figure 2.20: Proportion of African target population vaccinated (%)



Note: DTP: third diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine. HPV: human papillomavirus. MCV3: second measles-containing-vaccine dose. PCV: third dose of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine.

Source: UNDESA

2.1.12 Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in LDCs and SIDs

Table 2.13: SDG Target 3.c and Indicator 3.c.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 3.c: Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States Indicator 3.c.1: Health worker density and distribution	Not aligned

Most countries have seen the number of physicians and nurses increase over the past two decades, while the number of dentists and pharmacists has dropped in many cases. However, the number of trained medical workers in Africa remains well below world averages.

SDG Target 3.c. seeks to see a substantial increase in health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in LDCs and small island developing states. Progress is measured in terms of health worker density and distribution, for a core set of professional categories, namely dentists, nurses, midwives, pharmacists and physicians. Few countries in the African continent report on these indicators in a regular and consistent manner, which makes it difficult to measure progress against this SDG target in the region.

The available evidence suggests that while most countries in the continent have seen the number of physicians and nurses increase over the past two decades, the number of dentists and pharmacists has dropped in many cases. The number of trained medical workers in the African continent remains well below world averages. The number of nurses reached a regional average of 15.3 per 10,000 people in 2022 and that of doctors at 4.6, whereas there were only 0.29 and 0.47 dentists and pharmacists per 10,000, respectively. Globally, these figures reached 37.7, 17.3, 3.3 and 4.8, respectively. While there are significant variations in these figures on the subregional level, North, Southern and West Africa tend to do significantly better than East and, especially, Central Africa, in all of these indicators (see Box 2.5).

Box 2.5: Human resource management in Africa's healthcare sector

Human resource management (HRM) in the healthcare sector is a critical field that focuses on recruiting, retaining and developing a skilled, effective and motivated workforce (Owolabi *et al.*, 2024). The healthcare sector, characterized by its dynamic nature and constant evolution, faces unique challenges that require specialized HRM strategies to ensure the delivery of high-quality care to patients (Mahapatro, 2021; Surji and Sourchi, 2020). The recruitment of healthcare personnel in Africa must both fill the quantitative gap and correct spatial imbalances in the distribution of healthcare workers. Countries must adopt proactive recruitment policies, including campaigns targeting underserved regions, local recruitment and incentives for expatriate professionals to return (Owolabi *et al.*, 2024). In addition, decentralized recruitment allows for better adaptation to the needs of local communities and strengthens local professional networks, especially in rural and underserved areas (Dussault and Franceschini, 2006).

Furthermore, the quality of human capital depends heavily on the relevance of the training provided. In Africa, many medical training institutions are not aligned with actual health priorities (Africa CDC, 2025).[1] Frenk *et al.* (2010) emphasize the need to transform the education of health professionals to better respond to the challenges of the twenty-first century, particularly in terms of primary care, community health and chronic disease management. Innovative teaching approaches such as interprofessional learning, the use of clinical simulation and digital platforms can compensate for the lack of qualified trainers and promote continuous learning (Owolabi *et al.*, 2024). However, WHO (2020)[2] also emphasizes the importance of academic partnerships with other stakeholders to strengthen institutional capacity and the accreditation of training programmes in Africa. When it comes to retention, a combination of working conditions, professional recognition and opportunities for advancement are required (Owolabi *et al.,* 2024; Thusi and Nkgapele, 2024). Previous studies have indicated that financial and non-financial incentives, such as recognition, job security, professional support and participation in decision-making, have a significant effect on the motivation of healthcare personnel (Lehmann *et al.,* 2008). In addition, the introduction of remote area allowances, staff housing and degree programmes for workers in remote areas can strengthen their commitment to their jobs (Owolabi *et al.*, 2024; Dussault and Franceschini, 2006). Finally, strong institutional leadership, capable of ensuring safe, ethical and collaborative work environments, is key to preventing an exodus to the private sector or abroad (Owolabi *et al.*, 2024).

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[1] https://africacdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/PDF_-Human-Resources-for-Health-in-Africa-Long-feature.pdf

[2] https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241511131

2.1.13 Strengthening the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks

Table 2.14: SDG Target 3.d and Indicators 3.d.1 and 3.d.2 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 3.d: Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks Indicator 3.d.1: International Health Regulations (IHR) capacity and health emergency preparedness Indicator 3.d.2: Percentage of bloodstream infections due to selected antimicrobial-resistant organisms	Not aligned

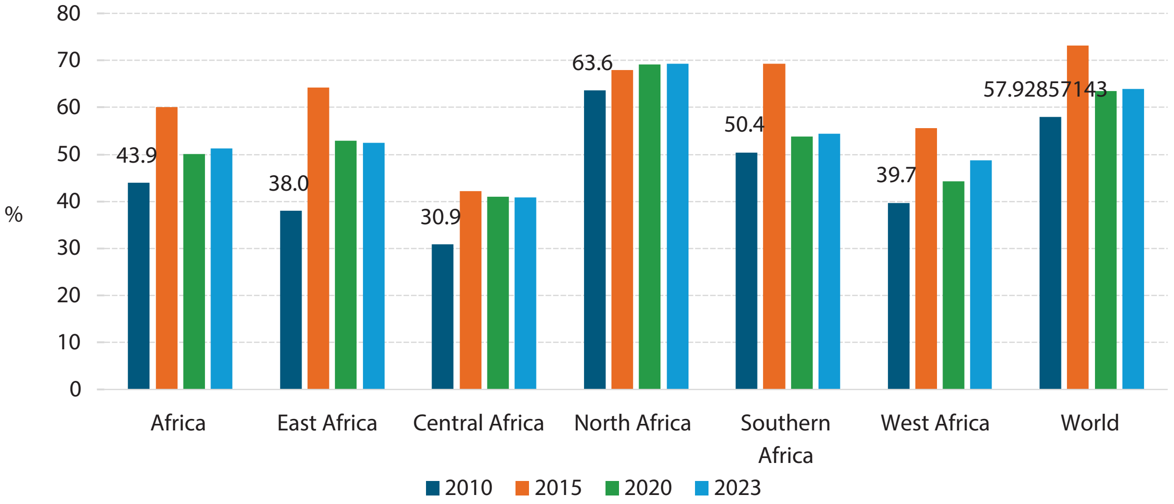
Capacities in the health sector for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks have increased significantly in Africa and more so than in other regions of the world, although they remain below world averages.

Progress against SDG target 3.D. is measured in terms of two indicators. The first of these, Indicator 3.d.1, measures countries' capacities to implement WHO International Health Regulations (IHR), a set of legally binding regulations requiring countries to work together to prevent and respond to the spread of disease and other public health threats. Capacities are measured in terms of percentage of attributes of a series of core capacities that have been attained by a given member state at a specific point in time.

Progress on this indicator in the African continent has been quite significant since 2010, the earliest year for which data is available, with the percentage of core capacities that have been attained increasing by 7.4 percentage points, from 43.9 percent in 2010 to 51.3 percent in 2023. This increase was higher than for developing countries as whole, at 5.9 percentage points, and higher than in East and Southeast Asia (4.9 percentage points), Europe (6.7 percentage points) and the world as a whole (5.9 percentage points). Overall, however, the percentage of core capacities that had been attained in Africa by 2023 (51.3 percent) remains below the world average (63.9 percent), and below all other regions in the world (see Figure 2.21).

Significant subregional differences exist. Capacities are stronger in North Africa (69.3 percent of core IHR capacities attained) and Southern Africa (54.4 percent), than in East Africa (52.4 percent), West Africa (48.8 percent) and Central Africa (40.8 percent) and historically have been so. Yet, it is these three subregions which have also experienced the fastest improvements in core IHR capacities, with this indicator growing by 14.4, 9.1 and 10.0 percentage points, respectively. Countries in the African continent that have done particularly well in increasing their IHR implementation capacities include Togo, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Uganda, who have seen the percentage of such capacities attained increase by 40, 32.1, 29.6, 26.5 and 24.3 percentage points, respectively.

Figure 2.21: Percentage of core capacities to implement WHO IHRs attained



Source: UNDESA

The percentage of bloodstream infections due to selected antimicrobial-resistant organisms have increased, although this could owe to climate conditions specific to Africa, as well as to improvements in testing capacities across the continent

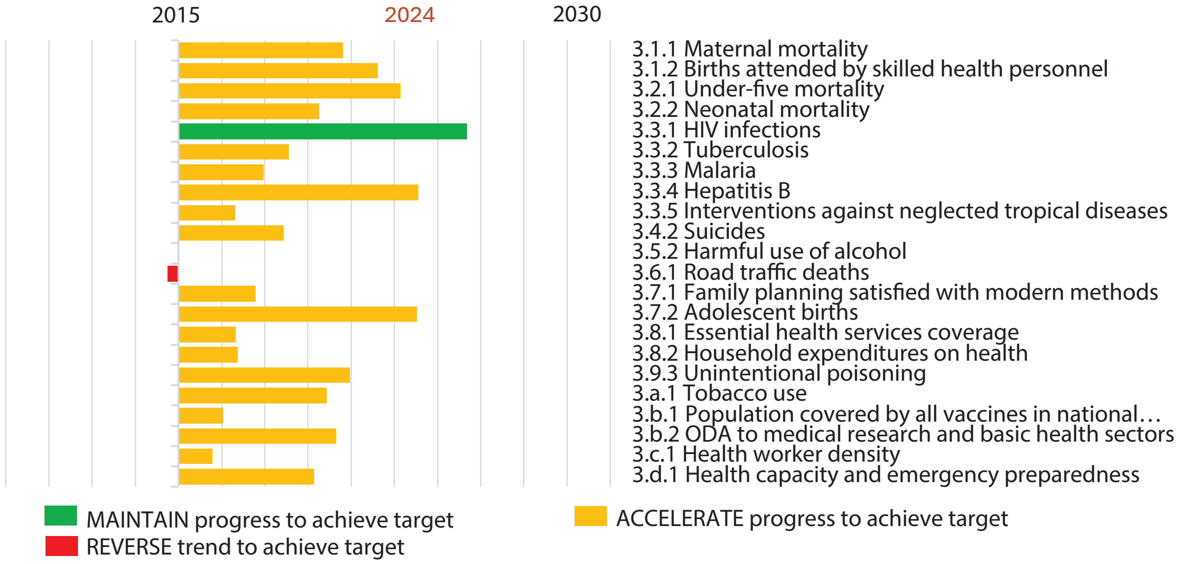
The second indicator against which progress towards SDG Target 3.D. is measured is the percentage of bloodstream infections due to selected antimicrobial-resistant organisms, with two such organisms taken as a reference: methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and Escherichia coli resistant to third-generation cephalosporin. For the first of these, rates of infection in Africa actually increased between 2019 and 2022, from 16.6 percent to 39.4 percent, and remain significantly higher than the world average, 33.9 percent and that of developed regions (10 percent). This could be due, however to differences in climate conditions in Africa and other parts of the world, as well as to improvements in testing capacities across the continent. Within Africa, this indicator is particularly high in Central Africa, at 82.2 percent.

Rates of detection for Escherichia coli, on the other hand, also increased between 2019 and 2022, from 41.1 percent to 68.7 percent and are also significantly higher than world average (44.6 percent), as well as developing regions as a whole at 60.8 percent. Within the continent, this percentage is highest for Central Africa (84.4 percent) and West Africa (81.7 percent), and lowest in Southern Africa (24.1 percent).

2.2 Conclusions

Africa has experienced significant improvements in health conditions and health outcomes over the past decade. Gains have been evenly spread across the continent, with several factors contributing to the improvement, as seen in this chapter. However, if African countries are to achieve SDG 3 in Africa by 2030 they will have to accelerate progress against most of the indicators as seen in Figure 2.22 below.

Figure 2.22: Actions that must be taken on SDG 3 indicators for African countries to achieve SDG 3 targets by 2030



Notes: The figures are colour-coded to indicate expected progress. Green is used for indicators with sufficient progress, where the target is likely to be achieved at the current pace. Yellow is used for indicators with insufficient progress to meet the target by 2030, and red is used for regressing indicators.

Source: ECA computations based on date from the SDG Global Database

Chapter 3

Sustainable Development Goal 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Key Messages

- Despite the importance of SDG 5 for sustainable development, significant gaps exist in its implementation due to discriminatory laws and societal norms, limiting women's access to economic resources and opportunities.

- Women's economic empowerment remains low due to discriminatory practices and a lack of legal frameworks. In 2022, 68 percent of women were in vulnerable employment, compared to 57 percent of men, while the gender wage gap persisted.

- Addressing VAWG is crucial. In 2023, 24 percent of women and girls were subjected to violence, despite progress in expanding legal protections and survivor support in many countries.

- Child marriage and female genital mutilation remain widespread, with significant burdens of unpaid care work on women, limiting their labour-force participation.

- Progress has been made in achieving gender parity in leadership, with women holding 26 percent of parliamentary seats and 43 percent of managerial positions in 2023.

- Women face obstacles in owning assets and property due to cultural and legal barriers. Gender disparities also exist in digital technologies, though the gap has narrowed.

Table 3.1: Sustainable Development Goal 5 and related Strategic Objective in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063 STYIP Strategic Objective
Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	6.3: Achieve full gender parity in all spheres

3.1 Progress towards and prospects for the achievement of Goal 5 and Related Agenda 2063 STYIP Strategic Objective

SDG 5 has nine Targets and 14 Indicators, focusing on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls by addressing systemic challenges through strengthened policy, legislative and institutional frameworks, economic empowerment and the integration of women's voices into all decision-making processes. In Africa, this goal is intricately linked to Agenda 2063 STYIP, Moonshot 6 - African Citizens are More Empowered and More Productive- Strategic Objective 6.3 - Achieve gender parity in all spheres.

Achieving SDG 5 in Africa is crucial not only for ethical reasons but also as a driver of economic growth and sustainable development. With women making up over half of the population, their full economic participation is essential for fostering inclusive growth and enhancing productivity. Furthermore, SDG 5 is foundational to achieving almost all the SDGs. Progress against SDG 5 supports the achievement of other SDGs, including poverty reduction (SDG 1), health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4) and decent work (SDG 8). Furthermore, achieving SDG 5 is deeply interconnected with a number of Strategic Objectives of Agenda 2063 STYIP. Whether it's fostering inclusive growth, promoting peace and security, or developing human capital, gender equality is essential to achieving the continent's long-term development goals. By prioritizing gender equality, Africa can ensure that all its citizens, especially women and girls, are active participants in the continent's transformation and that Africa realizes its full potential as a prosperous, united, and resilient continent.

Several key factors drive progress towards achieving SDG 5. Political will has played a significant role, as many African leaders have publicly endorsed gender equality. This political commitment is reflected in the establishment of policies, such as the Maputo Protocol, which protects women's rights on the continent.

In addition, legal frameworks have been crucial, with many African countries adopting laws to support gender equality, including legislation against domestic violence and sexual harassment. Furthermore, awareness and advocacy efforts by civil society organizations and international bodies such as UN Women have heightened awareness about gender equality issues across the continent.

The private sector is increasingly playing a crucial role in advancing gender equality, especially through equal pay initiatives, parental leave policies and anti-discrimination measures. In South Africa, for example, companies such as Vodacom and Investec conduct annual pay equity analyses, adjusting compensation to eliminate gender-based wage disparities in similar roles. In Kenya, major firms (including Unilever and MTN) are implementing transparent compensation frameworks, bias-free recruitment and pay gap audits to tackle wage inequality. Meanwhile in Nigeria, reviews have recommended that companies set public gender-balance targets and regularly assess their impact on the gender pay gap.[1] Eskom in South Africa offers up to six months of maternity leave, five months of which is fully paid, plus support such as lactation rooms and flexible work options. Finally, in Uganda, private banking initiatives support women's entrepreneurship while advocating for gender-responsive financial inclusion.[2]

Furthermore, education has been a significant driver, as improved access to education for girls has led to higher literacy rates among women, opening more opportunities for them in employment and political roles. Engaging young people in gender equality initiatives, particularly through education campaigns and youth-led advocacy is essential for achieving lasting social transformation.

With the rapid growth in Africa's young population, young people hold immense potential to drive change. In Uganda for example, organizations such as PowerToYouth actively involve young leaders in anti–gender-based violence campaigns, using creative peer-to-peer outreach such as festivals, poetry, drama and social media to shift norms around girls' rights.

Lastly, international support and partnerships from organizations like the UN, World Bank, and various NGOs have provided financial and technical assistance for gender-related projects, further strengthening efforts to achieve gender equality.

Despite these drivers, several factors continue to hinder progress towards achieving SDG 5. Cultural norms and social practices are deeply entrenched in many parts of Africa, with patriarchal attitudes and harmful practices such as child marriage and FGM continuing to obstruct gender equality efforts. Additionally, weak legal enforcement of gender equality laws is a significant challenge, as even where such laws exist, their enforcement is often inadequate, preventing women's rights from being fully protected in practice. In regions affected by political instability and conflict, women and girls often bear the brunt of the consequences, with gender equality initiatives being deprioritized or neglected. Economic disempowerment remains another key inhibitor, particularly in rural areas, where women face limited access to essential economic resources such as land, credit, and markets, preventing them from achieving economic independence. Finally, the lack of access to health services, particularly sexual and reproductive health services, remains a substantial barrier to women's empowerment, especially in rural regions where the health care infrastructure is often inadequate.

The informal sector of the labour market, which employs a large proportion of women, particularly in rural areas, has faced profound and interlinked challenges. These range from lack of social protection to job insecurity and wage disparities. These issues not only undermine women's economic stability but also perpetuate cycles of poverty and gender inequality. Most women in the informal economy have no access to pensions, health insurance or unemployment benefits, leaving

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[1] https://mg.co.za/article/2019-08-08-00-why-the-gender-pay-gap-persists/?utm

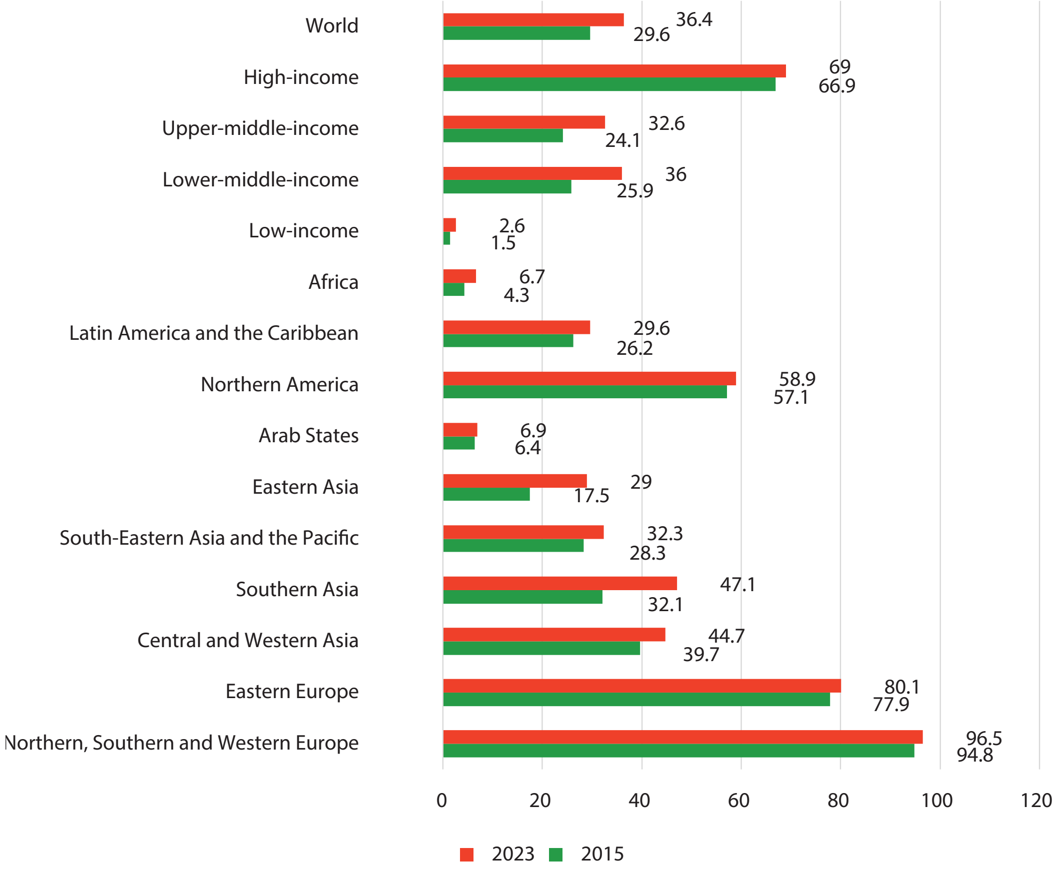
[2] https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/feature-story/2024/08/womens-empowerment-principles-signatories-support-working-mothers-in-corporate-south-africa?utm

them vulnerable to financial shocks, illness and old age.

The ILO reports that the effective population coverage of maternity benefits in Africa is low, with only 6.7 percent of women in 2023 giving birth receiving maternity cash benefits to compensate for lower income-generating capacities around the time of childbirth. With global averages of 29.6 percent in 2015 and 36.4 percent in 2023, this data shows (see Figure 3.1 below) that higher income countries and European countries lead in this area (ILO, 2024a). Limited maternity coverage increases the risk of poverty for women during late pregnancy and after childbirth and often compels them to work until the final stages of their pregnancy or return to work too early, putting both their health and their children's at serious risk (Staab et al., 2024).

Climate change disproportionately affects women and girls in rural areas of Africa due to existing social, economic and cultural dynamics. In many African rural communities, women are primarily responsible for securing food, water and fuel for households. Climate-induced droughts, unpredictable rainfall and extreme weather increase this burden significantly. In Zimbabwe, for example, women report travelling much longer distances to fetch water during dry seasons, hindering their ability to engage in productive work and increasing their vulnerability to gender-based violence.

Figure 3.1: SDG indicator 1.3.1 on effective coverage for maternity protection: Share of women giving birth receiving maternity cash benefits, by region, subregion and income level, 2015 and 2023 (percentage)



Source: (ILO, 2024a)

The analysis of progress against SDG 5 reveals several limitations that hinder accurate assessment and the effective implementation of gender equality initiatives across Africa. One significant challenge is data gaps and quality, as reliable, sex-disaggregated data is often scarce, particularly in remote and rural areas. This lack of data makes it difficult to monitor progress and develop evidence-based policies that can drive meaningful change. Additionally, the variations in local contexts across the continent present a further obstacle. Africa is highly diverse, with differences in sociocultural, political, and economic conditions, making it challenging to apply a one-size-fits-all approach to gender equality. Consequently, interventions must be tailored to fit local contexts if they are to be effective. Another issue is measurement problems, as the indicators commonly used to assess gender equality progress often fail to capture more nuanced aspects, such as the quality of women's political participation or the subtle but impactful role of social norms in shaping women's empowerment. Furthermore, unequal implementation of policies remains a significant barrier. Even when gender equality policies are in place, they are not always applied consistently across regions. Variations in government capacity, available funding and local governance structures can impede the success of gender equality programmes. Finally, political sensitivities around gender issues in some African countries complicate the adoption and implementation of gender equality reforms. In many cases, cultural or religious values may limit public discussions on gender, further slowing progress towards achieving SDG 5.

3.1.1 End all forms of discrimination against women and girls

Table 3.2: SDG Target 5.1 and Indicator 5.1.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere Indicator 5.1.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	Target 6.3.2: All women have rights to own and inherit property, sign contracts, manage business and own a bank account including land

Discriminatory laws and societal norms continue to pose significant barriers for women in accessing economic resources, property ownership and financial services, limiting their opportunities and impeding job creation and economic growth.

Globally, progress has been made in establishing legal frameworks to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex. The percentage of achievement globally stood at 77 percent in 2024 compared to 73.4 percent in 2018 in the area of employment and economic benefits.[3]

Although laws have been enacted across Africa to eliminate discrimination and enhance women's rights (see Box 3.1), women still possess only around three-

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[3] UNDESA Data, date of access 31 May 2025.

Box 3.1: South African initiatives to enhance gender equality

The government of South Africa has aligned its policies, strategies and action plans with the SDGs, particularly those addressing gender equality across social, economic, and environmental dimensions. In support of SDG 5, the country has developed and implemented a comprehensive framework of national laws, policies, and strategies aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women. A significant milestone in this effort was the 2018 Presidential Summit Against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF), which highlighted the urgency of closing legislative gaps and expediting the enactment of pending laws. Following the summit, the National Strategic Plan on GBVF was introduced, emphasizing the need for stronger policy measures and more effective implementation. In a major step forward, President Cyril Ramaphosa signed three key pieces of legislation in January 2022 to bolster the fight against gender-based violence (GBV): the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, the Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Act, and the Domestic Violence Amendment Act. As of December 2022, South Africa was ninth in the world in terms of women's representation in national parliaments, according to the Interparliamentary Union (2022). Despite notable progress, violence against women remains one of the most urgent gender-related challenges in South Africa. Although legislation such as the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act exists to combat GBV, women and girls continue to experience high rates of sexual and physical abuse. Addressing this issue requires not only stronger enforcement but also deeper societal change to confront the entrenched mindsets and harmful stereotypes that often drive such violence (2025).

Source: Sustainable Development goals Country Report 2023 South Africa SDG_Country_report South Africa.pdf

quarters of the legal rights granted to men. As of June 2023, 43 member states had ratified the Maputo Protocol,[4] however, considerable gaps remain in areas such as human capital development, employment opportunities, asset ownership, and women's agency. Only 15 countries have established strong legal frameworks that effectively promote gender equality, while nearly 60 percent lack adequate data on these issues.[5]

Progress has been made in terms of providing women with equal opportunities to start businesses and access property. However discriminatory laws and deeply rooted cultural practices continue to limit their ability to own property, access credit and participate in economic activities on an equal footing with men. In 12 percent of African countries, women are required to provide additional documentation or seek male consent to open bank accounts, while approximately 4 percent of countries restrict women's ability to sign business contracts or access credit equally.[6] Northern Africa exhibits the highest incidence of legal restrictions on women's rights to inherit, own or manage property.[7] Furthermore, more than 50 percent of countries do not offer substantial maternity benefits, and just over half have enacted legislation on equal pay (see Figure 3.2).

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[4] The Maputo protocol addresses critical issues such as female genital mutilation, child marriage, and violence against women and promotes women's empowerment and participation in public life.

[5] ECA estimates based on data from the UNSDG data portal (https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database), with UN Women as the primary data source.

[6] ECA estimates based on data from World Bank Gender Statistics, World Bank, 2024. Licence: CC BY 4.0.

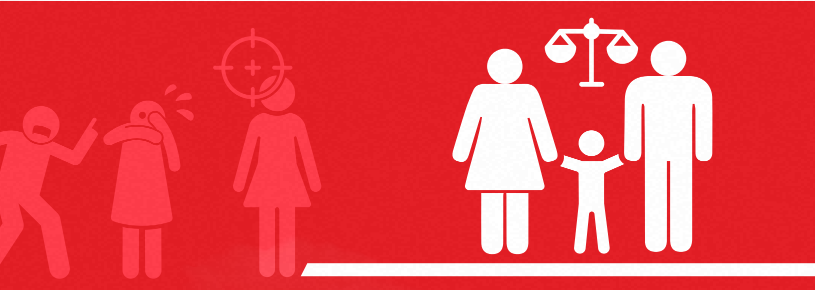
[7] ECA estimates based on data from World Bank Gender Statistics, World Bank, 2024. Licence: CC BY 4.0.

Figure 3.2:

Number of countries with key economic and social rights for women, Africa, 2015-2023

From 2015 to 2023, African countries made gradual progress in legally recognizing key economic and social rights for women:

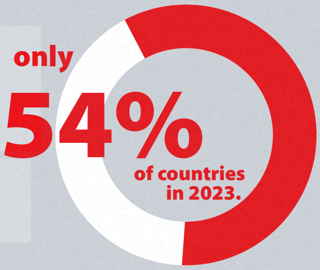
Most Improved Rights



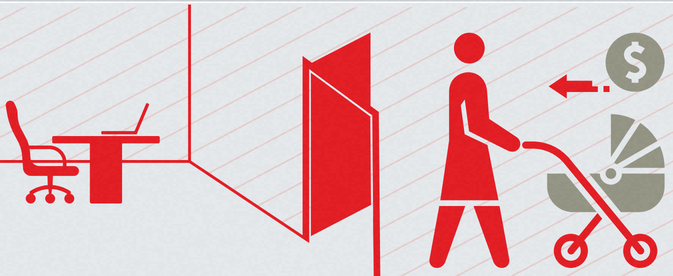
Domestic violence laws saw the *fastest adoption*

+64%.

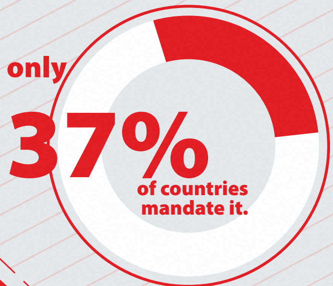
Equal pay *improved* significantly but remains limited



only **54%** of countries in 2023.



Parental leave *progressed* the least



only **37%** of countries mandate it.

Slow Progress

Property rights

+5%

Paid leave

+11%

Business rights were *already strong*

90%+ and saw little change.

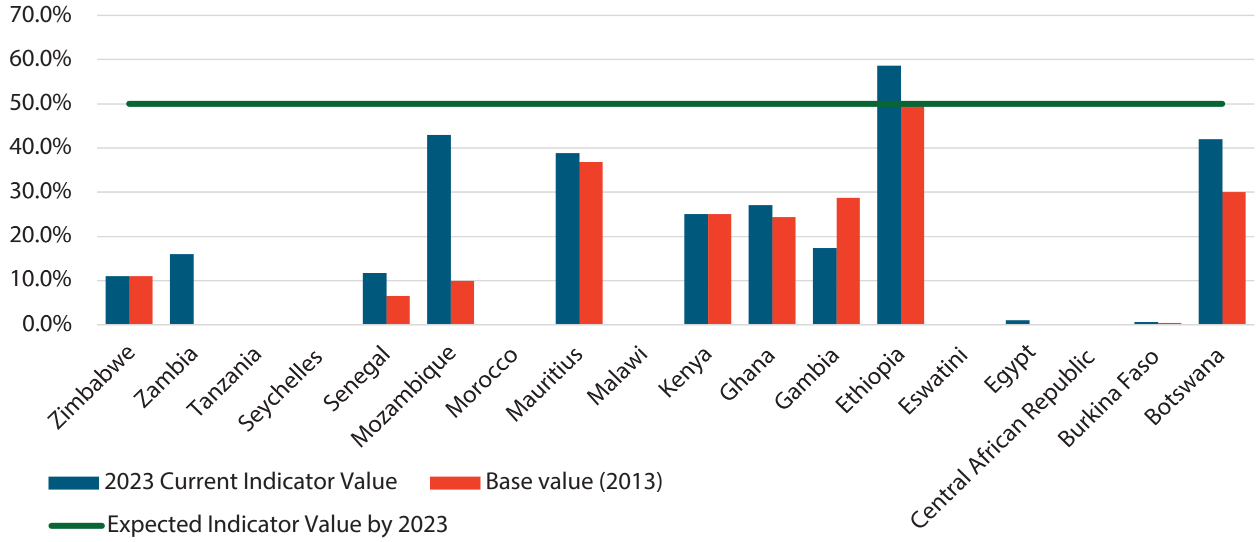
Economic empowerment

In the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) of Agenda 2063, a target of 50 percent was set for equal economic rights for women, including the rights to own and inherit property, sign a contract, save, register and manage a business and own and operate a bank account by 2025. This target is crucial for fostering gender equality and empowering women economically across Africa, which is in turn essential for broader development goals. The associated indicator for this target is the proportion of women in the total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land (AUC, 2015). In relation to the target set in the FTYIP, the proportion of women with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land increased to 20 percent in 2023.[8] While this marks progress, the increase is modest, indicating that while there has been some improvement, challenges remain in creating lasting and widespread change. This value suggests that ongoing barriers, such as lack of access to financial resources, legal and cultural restrictions and unequal land inheritance practices, continue to limit women's access to economic rights. Ethiopia ranked highest with regards to equal economic rights for women, including the rights to own and inherit property as indicated in Figure 3.3 below.

Legal reforms and persistent disparities in employment and education across Africa

Eighty-two percent of the 39 African countries involved in the Beijing+30 review have strengthened legislation prohibiting discrimination against women in hiring and promotion processes. Additionally, 16 countries have established mechanisms to ensure women's involvement in economic decision-making bodies. Several member states are also taking steps to eliminate discrimination against girls, with 30 countries

Figure 3.3: Equal economic rights for women, including the rights to own and inherit property



Source: Third Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063.

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[8] Third Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063

adopting initiatives to combat harmful social norms and enhance girls' access to education and skills development.

Despite these advancements, women are still disproportionately employed in informal and precarious jobs, especially in agriculture and services, where job security is often lacking. In 2022, 68 percent of women were in vulnerable employment, compared to 57 percent of men. The gender wage gap exacerbates these disparities, as women earned 21 percent less than men in high-skilled positions in 2023.

Ongoing gender disparities in workforce participation reflect persistent challenges in enforcing gender equality laws. Although women's access to education has improved, they continue to be under-represented in STEM fields and vocational training due to entrenched societal norms and discriminatory practices.

In 2022, Africa was 20.3 percentage points below the world level for the implementation of legal frameworks to promote, enforce and monitor gender equality in relation to employment and economic benefits (see Figure 3.4).

3.1.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls

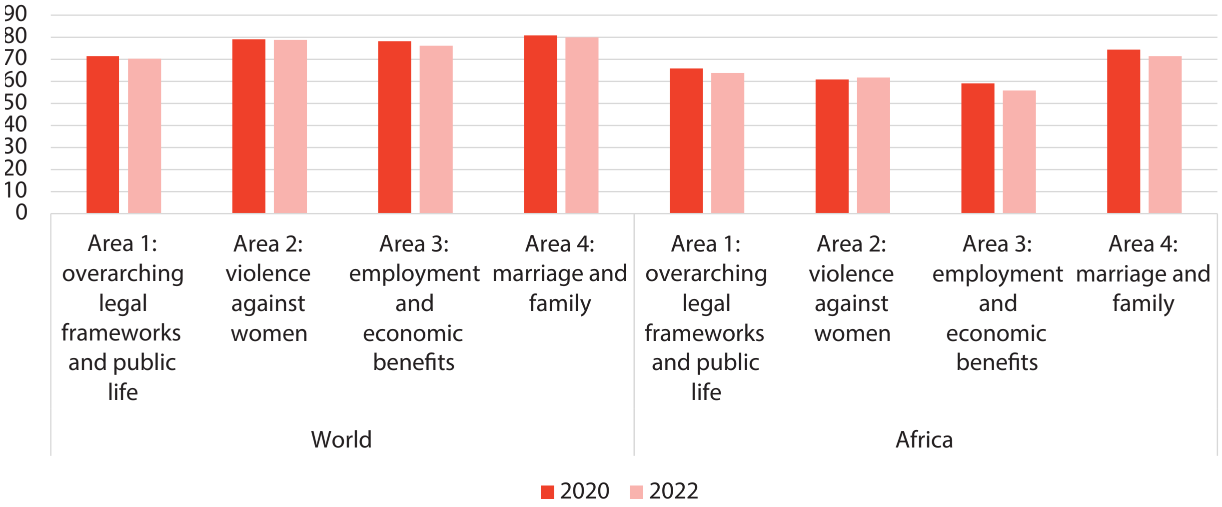
Table 3.3: SDG Target 5.2 and Indicators 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation Indicator 5.2.1: Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age Indicator 5.2.2: Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence	Target 6.3.5: Violence against women and girls is eliminated Indicator 72: Percentage of reported cases of violence against women and girls that have been prosecuted

Stronger domestic violence laws and improved prosecutions have reduced intimate partner violence in some areas. However, many African countries continue to experience rising rates of domestic violence

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a serious human rights violation and a public health issue with significant economic consequences. According to the IMF, a one percent increase in women experiencing GBV can result in an eight percent reduction in national economic activity, especially in countries where protective laws are weak and women have limited decision-making power (Ouedraogo & Stenzel, 2021). Implementing strong legislative measures can create safer environments for women, thereby boosting their economic

Figure 3.4: Legal frameworks that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality, by area



Source: United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database

participation. As a result, addressing VAWG not only reduces its immediate costs but also redirects resources towards developmental priorities such as job creation.

Intimate partner violence remains prevalent in Africa, with significant regional differences. While stronger domestic violence laws and improved prosecutions have reduced intimate partner violence in some areas, many African countries continue to experience rising rates of domestic violence. Nearly one in five women and girls (19.3 percent) aged 15-49 in Africa, and one in seven (14.7 percent) in North Africa, have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the past year.[9] In some countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, this ratio is nearly one in three women and girls (35.6 percent)[10]. Non-partner sexual violence also remains a significant issue, with many cases going unreported due to stigma and fear of retaliation.

African countries have made significant strides in combating VAWG by implementing various strategies, as highlighted in the Beijing+30 review. Thirty-six countries enhanced survivor support services such as shelters and legal aid, while 35 strengthened laws to prevent violence. Initiatives in 22 countries have focused on understanding the extent and consequences of this violence (see Box 3.2).

Preventing GBV has also been a central priority, with 34 countries implementing educational and community-based initiatives, and 31 developing national action plans. Data collection has improved in 21 countries, as seen in Malawi and Liberia, where systems have been upgraded to support evidence-based responses. Additionally, 37 countries are working to economically empower women and 33 are engaging community leaders to promote positive social norms. Public awareness campaigns are also being conducted to encourage gender-equitable attitudes and non-violent relationships.

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[9] Source: ECA Calculations based on SDG data from DESA (DESA, 2024b) and World Population Prospects 2024 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2024)

[10] United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

Box 3.2: “Tamkine” in Morocco

In Morocco, “Tamkine,” meaning empowerment, served as the central strategy of the “Programme for the Fight Against Gender-Based Violence Through the Empowerment of Women and Girls.” This multi-sectoral initiative brought together 13 national institutions and more than 50 NGOs to address violence against women (VAW). The programme aimed to prevent and protect women and girls from all forms of violence by tackling the interconnected issues of poverty and vulnerability.

The programme significantly enhanced access to legal, psychological, social, and economic support for women survivors of violence. Since its launch in 2008, a total of 4,651 women have benefited from centres supported by the programme, dedicated to assisting survivors. The number of counselling centres increased from 38 in 2008 to 52 by 2010. One notable example is the Batha Centre, a multifunctional facility operated by the association *Initiatives pour la Protection des Droits des Femmes* (IPDF). The Centre provides a safe and supportive space for women and their children, while also offering livelihood training in areas such as confectionery, goldsmithing, and cookery. Beyond immediate care, the Centre’s mission focuses on long-term empowerment, aiming to break the cycle of violence by promoting gender equality through education, advocacy, and awareness-raising. It also works to ensure better access to quality services that support women’s economic, social, and political empowerment. The Centre’s approach is based on a common strategic framework that facilitates the provision of continuous, multi-sectoral care. Its integrated services—ranging from intake, counselling and shelter to vocational training and job placement—form a seamless chain of support. The Centre also collaborates with external institutions such as hospitals and police stations to ensure a holistic care network. Central to its mission is the belief that true change comes through empowerment. By 2009, the Centre had provided shelter and support to over 1,000 women. Just one year later, in January 2010, this number had nearly doubled, with more than 1,900 women having accessed its services. The Centre and its chain of services have succeeded in raising awareness among the population about women’s rights and GBV. Radio was an important vehicle for this aspect of the programme.

Source: Government of Morocco (2025). Case study provided for the 2025 ASDR input.

(AUC, 2015). In 2023, the proportion of women and girls subjected to sexual and physical violence remained at 24 percent.[11] This indicates that despite efforts, the incidence of violence has not decreased over the ten-year period and remains unchanged.

The stagnant rate of 24 percent suggests that Africa is facing persistent challenges in meeting the Agenda 2063 target of reducing violence against women and girls by 20 percent. Among the 13 countries that reported on this indicator, six had successfully met the target of reducing the proportion of women and girls affected by violence to the expected level for 2023. However, seven countries had not met the target, eight countries made improvements, and five countries had seen a regression as indicated in Figure 3.5 below, with higher levels of violence in 2023 compared to 2013.[12]

While efforts have been made, there is a need for greater emphasis on legal reform, enforcement, and societal change to achieve significant progress. A comprehensive approach, focusing on prevention, support and addressing cultural norms, is essential to reducing GBV and achieving the desired outcomes for women and girls in Africa, see Figure 3.5).

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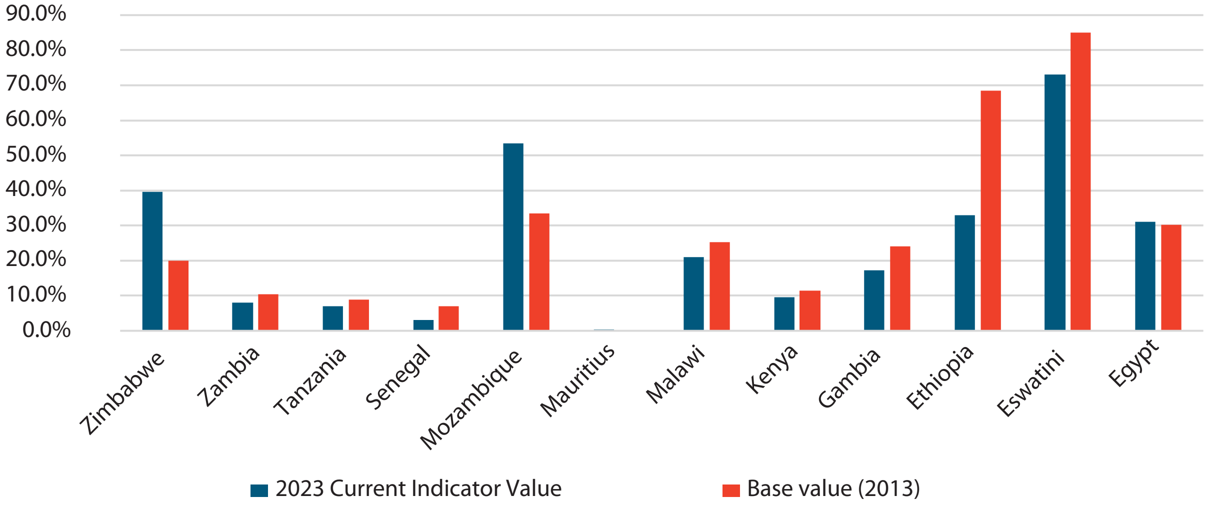
[11] Third Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063

[12] Third Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063

Figure 3.5: Extent to which violence against women and girls has been reduced



Source: Third Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063

3.1.3 Eliminate all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and FGM

Table 3.4: SDG Target 5.3 and Indicators 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation	Target 6.3.6: End harmful social norms and customary practices against women and girls such as child marriage and FGM
Indicator 5.3.1: Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18	Indicator 73: Percent change in girls and women who have undergone FGM
Indicator 5.3.2: Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age	Indicator 74: Percent change in girl-children subjected to child marriage

Globally, there has been a positive trend in reducing child marriage over the two decades. There has been a consistent decline in the proportion of women aged 20-24 who were married or in a union before the age of 15. In 2003, the figure was 8.14 percent, and by 2023, it had dropped to 4.28 percent.[13] This suggests significant progress towards addressing child marriage on a global scale.

Child marriage continues to be a significant concern in Africa, with approximately 30 percent of women aged 20-24 having been married before the age of 18, as illustrated in Figure 3.6 below. Between 2017 and 2022, progress was limited, with a decrease of just 2.1 percentage points in this statistic. Early marriage is most prevalent in Central, East, and West Africa. In comparison, North Africa fares better, with child marriage rates which are considerably lower than the global average (see Figure 3.6).

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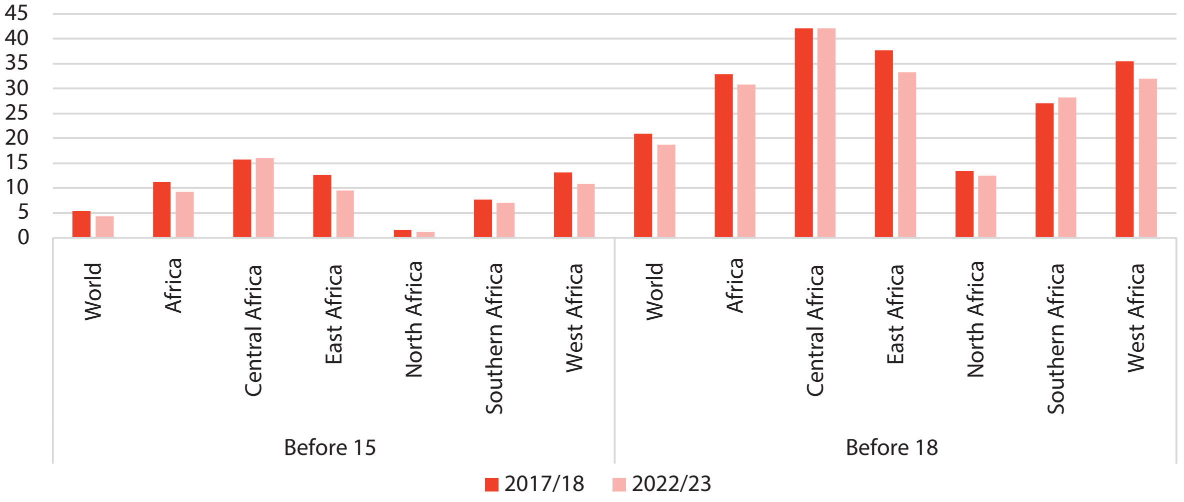
[13] Data from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Figure 3.6: Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before the ages of 15 and 18 years (percentage)



Source: ECA, Sustainable Development Goal Indicator Database

Although the prevalence of child marriage has declined in some regions, setbacks from the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing crises such as climate change and conflicts, and underreporting have hindered progress (African Union Commission et al., 2020). Despite being banned in many African countries,[14] child marriage remains widespread, with 130 million women and girls in Africa in 2023 being married before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2022). Between 2015 and 2023, 28.65 percent of women aged 20 to 24 in Africa had been married or were in a union before turning 18 (UNICEF, 2022).[15]

African countries make up 16 of the top 20 nations with the highest rates of child marriage, with the first seven on the list all from Africa (Girls Not Brides, 2024). If current trends continue, an additional 20 million girls in East and Southern Africa are expected to marry during childhood in the next decade, threatening the SDG goal of ending child marriage (UNICEF, 2022). Countries such as Malawi are initiating programmes to eliminate child marriage (see Box 3.3 below).

Notable progress, albeit uneven, across African countries in eliminating FGM

Harmful practices like child, early, and forced marriage, along with FGM, marginalize women and girls, limiting their opportunities for education and employment. This reduces their ability to contribute to the economy and perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality. Tackling these issues with inclusive, evidence-based solutions is essential for empowering women and girls and fostering economic growth across the continent.

Although there have been notable strides in the fight against FGM, with several countries implementing stricter laws and

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[14] Countries, including Malawi, have raised the legal marriage age to 18, imposing penalties for offenders, while Ethiopia has also banned child marriage, although with varying degrees of enforcement

[15] ECA calculations based on data from UNICEF (UNICEF global databases, 2024, based on DHS, MICS and other national surveys, 2024)and World Population Prospects 2024 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2024)

Box 3.3: Empowering girls and ending child marriage in Mangochi, Malawi

In response to child marriage and female illiteracy, UN Women, with support from the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund, launched a project in 2023 targeting gender inequalities and women's empowerment in Mangochi and two other border districts in Malawi. A key player in Mangochi has been the Women's Movement for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding, comprising 50 women across five traditional authorities, which has actively worked to prevent GBV, end child marriages and support girls' return to school. Since the project began, over 50 child marriages have been annulled and 28 girls have re-enrolled in school, demonstrating progress towards improving the lives of girls and women in the district.

Source: UN Women Malawi (2024)

community-based interventions, the practice remains prevalent in certain regions due to deep-rooted cultural norms.[16] In 2022, 41.4 percent of girls aged 15-49 years in Africa had undergone FGM (UNICEF, 2023). In 2020, Somalia and the Gambia reported the highest rates of FGM among girls aged 15-49, with figures of 99.2 percent and 72.6 percent, respectively (see Box 3.4).[17]

One of the targets in the FTYIP (2014–2023) of Agenda 2063 addresses harmful social norms and customary practices that perpetuate violence and discrimination against women and girls. Specifically, Target 17.2.2 seeks to reduce by 50 percent all harmful practices, including female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), by 2023 (AUC, 2015). This is a critical step towards achieving gender equality, reducing violence, and improving the overall well-being of women and girls across the African continent.

The indicator value of 22 percent in 2023 represents a 3 percent decrease from the base value of 25 percent in 2013, but it is

Box 3.4: The stand against gender-based violence in Kenya: engaging with elders to eradicate harmful practices

Kenya has made significant progress in reducing FGM, with prevalence dropping from 32 percent in 2003 to 15 percent in 2022, thanks to strong legal frameworks, including the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, and active community engagement. A major factor in this reduction has been the commitment of community elders in counties such as Samburu and Bungoma, who have publicly declared an end to FGM, inspiring others to follow. These declarations are supported by government policies and partnerships with organizations such as UN Women, fostering peer learning and cultural dialogue that challenge harmful traditions. Male engagement efforts, including outreach to Maasai Morans, have also contributed to shifting attitudes against GBV. The country's role as a co-leader in the Global Generation Equality GBV Action Coalition underscores its commitment, with investments of US$ 50 million planned for GBV prevention and the integration of GBV services into universal health coverage. Through these comprehensive efforts, Kenya is creating safer communities where women and girls can live free from violence and harmful practices.

Source: UN Women (2024)

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[16] Countries, such as Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda, have criminalized FGM and allocated funds to end the practice

[17] UNICEF database 2023.

still far from the 50 percent reduction target set for 2023 (which would have brought the percentage to 12 percent).[18] This suggests that while there has been some progress, it is insufficient to meet the target within the time frame (see Figure 3.7).

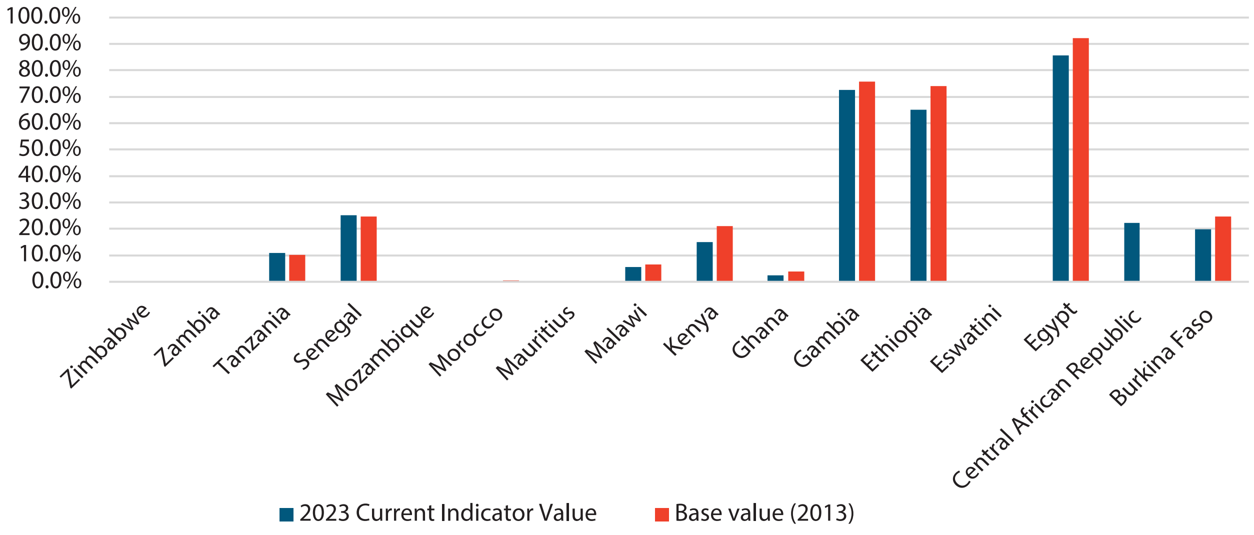
The data on efforts to reduce harmful social norms and customary practices against women and girls highlights both progress and challenges across various countries. For instance, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, Mauritius, Eswatini, and Malawi reported no cases of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). This indicates that these countries either have effective policies and interventions in place or that such practices are not widespread. Achieving this target means these nations have successfully maintained the absence of FGM/C, helping protect women and girls from this form of violence and discrimination.[19]

On the other hand, countries like Tanzania, Senegal, Kenya, Ghana, Gambia, Ethiopia, and Burkina Faso did not meet the 50 percent reduction goal, suggesting that more efforts are needed to address harmful practices against women and girls. Some necessary interventions may include reviewing and enforcing legal frameworks and implementing educational programmes to further reduce instances of FGM/C and other harmful practices.[20]

Countries with negative progress

The Central African Republic has seen an increase in the rate of FGM/C compared to 2013, suggesting a setback in efforts

Figure 3.7: Extent to which harmful social norms and customary practices against women and girls have been reduced



Source: 2023 Third Biennial Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063 based on reports from member states

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[18] 2023 Third Biennial Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063 based on Reports from Member States

[19] 2023 Third Biennial Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063 based on Reports from Member States

[20] 2023 Third Biennial Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063 based on Reports from Member States

to combat these harmful practices or a worsening of factors contributing to their prevalence. This rise may be attributed to political instability, ineffective governance or cultural resistance to change.[21]

Notable reductions

Egypt has made significant strides in reducing its rate of FGM/C, demonstrating positive progress, though it has not yet reached the 50 percent reduction target. This reflects the effectiveness of the efforts undertaken by Egypt, but more work remains to be done to achieve the desired reduction. These findings suggest that countries must continue to develop strong policies, engage communities in discussions to shift social norms, enforce laws against FGM/C and other harmful practices and offer support and protection to those at risk. The data underscores the need for ongoing efforts, especially in countries where progress is slow or negative, and highlights the importance of approaches tailored to each country's unique cultural, social and political contexts.[22]

3.1.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work

Table 3.5: SDG Target 5.4 and Indicator 5.4.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 5.4: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate Indicator 5.4.1: Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location	Not aligned

The need to recognize and redistribute unpaid care work

Globally, women consistently spend more time on unpaid domestic and care work compared to men. Unpaid care work plays a vital role in the economy, yet it is frequently overlooked in socioeconomic frameworks and undervalued in GDP calculations (Elson, 1999). Acknowledging and redistributing this work has the potential to unlock significant economic opportunities. For example, investing in infrastructure and social services can alleviate the burden of unpaid labour, allowing more women to enter the formal labour market, create jobs and promote inclusive economic growth.

Addressing gaps in care policies and expanding quality care services could generate nearly 300 million jobs by 2035, greatly reducing gender inequalities in employment and delivering significant economic and social benefits (ILO, 2022). Importantly, between 70 percent and 90 percent of these jobs are expected to benefit women (UN Women, 2021). Additionally, investments in the care sector are forecasted to create nearly three times as many jobs as similar investments in construction, while also

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[21] 2023 Third Biennial Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063 based on Reports from Member States

[22] 2023 Third Biennial Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063 based on Reports from Member States

producing 30 percent fewer greenhouse gas emissions (Diski, 2022).

Women across Africa continue to shoulder a significantly higher burden of unpaid work than men. On average, women spend 249 minutes per day on unpaid care work compared to just 87 minutes for men. In contrast, men dedicate more time to paid work, spending 275 minutes per day, while women spend 184 minutes on paid work (United Nations, 2024).

Parental leave policies are still limited, with only 57 percent of countries offering 14 weeks of government-supported leave and just 31 percent providing full maternity benefits. Similarly, while 26 countries offer parental leave, unpaid household labour is largely unrecognized in economic valuations, especially in North Africa. These disparities have significant consequences for women's economic and political participation, contributing to ongoing gender pay gaps.[23]

Despite slow progress in recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work, African countries have made notable strides in developing transformative care policies, including social protection systems, care services and labour regulations, according to the Beijing+30 review. Countries such as Algeria, Congo and Kenya have implemented paid maternity leave, while Egypt, Morocco and South Africa provide unemployment benefits. Special social grants are available for domestic workers and vulnerable groups in Côte d'Ivoire, Namibia, Senegal and South Africa. Thirty-four countries have expanded cash transfer programmes prioritizing women and 19 have introduced initiatives for working-age women. Additionally, 21 countries have improved social protection for marginalized women and 16 have expanded coverage for those in informal employment.

Support for caregivers has grown, with 25 countries improving caregiver assistance and 20 making childcare more affordable. Eight countries have included unpaid care work in national statistics, while 13 have invested in infrastructure to ease caregivers' workloads.[24] Legal reforms in 12 countries have acknowledged the economic value of household work,[25] and 11 have advocated for better conditions for paid care workers.[26] Additionally, 26 of the 39 countries reviewed have strengthened parental leave policies and more than half have launched campaigns to involve men and boys in unpaid care work.

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[23] World Bank Gender Statistics, World Bank, 2024. Licence: CC BY 4.0

[24] Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Somalia, and South Africa.

[25] Botswana, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe

[26] Benin, Burundi, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Tunisia.

3.1.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels

Table 3.6: SDG Target 5.5 and Indicators 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life Indicator 5.5.1: Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments Indicator 5.5.2: Proportion of women in managerial positions	Target 6.3.3: At least 50% of all elected officials at local, regional, and national levels are women in all AU Member States; Indicator 70: Percentage of women among elected officials in political positions at local and national levels
	Target 6.3.4: At least 50% of management positions in public and 30% private sector are held by women Indicator 71: Percentage of management positions held by women in formal sectors

Steady increase in the proportion of elected seats held by women in local governments

Empowering women in leadership roles introduces diverse viewpoints, improves decision-making, and fosters inclusive policies that drive job creation and promote sustainable development. Studies show that companies with three or more women in senior management positions perform better across multiple metrics, highlighting the economic advantages of gender diversity in leadership (UN Women, 2015).

Globally, the steady increase in the proportion of elected seats held by women in local governments, from 33.89 percent in 2020 to 35.47 percent in 2023 (UN Women, 2015) is a positive development, but achieving full gender equality in political leadership requires sustained efforts.

Although there has been some progress in increasing women's participation in political and public spheres, advancements in Africa have been slow and inconsistent. Some countries, including Benin and Burundi, have provided constitutional support to enhance women's leadership positions (see Box below). In 2023, women held 26 percent of parliamentary seats across the continent, up from 19 percent in 2015, and occupied only 43 percent of managerial positions, despite making up 53.5 percent of the workforce (ILO, 2024). Rwanda and Namibia are the only countries to have achieved gender parity,[27] while many others still lag behind, highlighting the ongoing need for sustained efforts to boost women's involvement in decision-making processes across the continent.

African countries have increasingly implemented initiatives to enhance women's political participation, including skills development programmes, improved data collection and capacity-building for emerging leaders. This can be seen, for example, in the case of Libya (see Box 3.6 below). Twenty-five countries in the Beijing+30 review have adopted temporary special measures such as gender quotas, including the 2023

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[27] ECA analysis using data from Interparliamentary Union (https://data.ipu.org/)

Box 3.5: Constitutional support for women's rights in Benin and Burundi

Benin

In Benin, the promotion of women's representation on electoral lists for legislative elections is governed by specific legal provisions. Law No. 2019-43 of 15 November 2019 on the Electoral Code introduced measures aimed at ensuring better representation of women in parliament.

Additionally, Law No. 2021-11 of 20 December 2021, concerning special provisions for the repression of offences committed on the basis of a person's gender and the protection of women in the Republic of Benin, was passed and enacted.

Currently, the proportion of seats held by women in parliament stands at 26.6 percent, compared to 7.32 percent in the 8th legislature (2019–2023). The proportion of female ministers has also increased, rising from 20.83 percent to 21.74 percent between 2015 and 2022.

Burundi

Burundi has enshrined gender equality into the country's Constitution, which stipulates that women must occupy more than 40 percent of decision-making positions. The Constitution of Burundi also guarantees gender equality.

Source: Government of Benin and Burundi (2025). Case study provided for the 2025 ASDR input.

law in Sierra Leone which mandated a 30 percent female candidate quota. While some countries including Rwanda, Namibia and Mozambique have successfully increased representation through quotas, others such as Lesotho, Mali and Somalia struggle with implementation due to patriarchal systems.

Research by the ECA highlights the need for strong women's movements alongside quota enforcement (ECA, 2018). Twelve countries have strengthened these measures, with Cape Verde enforcing a 40 percent minimum representation quota for women. Additionally, 18 countries have introduced measures to combat violence against women in politics, and 15 have enhanced civic protection for women's rights' advocates.

In the FTYIP of Agenda 2063, a target was established to achieve gender equality, aiming for at least 30 percent of all elected officials at local, regional and national levels, including in judicial institutions, to be women by 2023. The indicator measures the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments, regional bodies and local governance structures. By 2023, women held 34 percent of these seats, surpassing the 30 percent target. This marks a significant improvement on the 27 percent recorded in 2013, reflecting substantial progress towards increased gender representation in political and judicial decision-making. While the 2023 figure exceeds the target, it underscores the ongoing efforts needed to achieve gender parity in leadership and maintain this progress in the future. The achievement shows that African nations are on the right path, though challenges remain in attaining full gender equality across all levels of governance.[28]

The proportion of women in managerial positions in Africa is higher than global average

Achieving gender parity in managerial positions is crucial for empowering women,

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[28] 2023 Third Biennial Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063 based on Reports from Member States

Box 3.6: Strengthening women's political participation in Libya: progress through the Ra'idat initiative

The Ra'idat Programme, a joint initiative by UNSMIL, UNDP, UN Women and UNICEF, aims to empower young Libyan women (aged 18–30) from across the country to actively engage in political thought, leadership and decision-making. Launched in September, the programme's inaugural session introduced participants to inclusive democratic principles and the critical role of women in electoral processes. This resulted in greater self-confidence, improved communication skills and increased civic awareness among the participants.

Following the success of the first cohort, a second cohort of 35 young women was trained in 2024, equipping them to serve as ambassadors of leadership and political participation within their communities. Building on this momentum, a third cohort is planned for 2025.

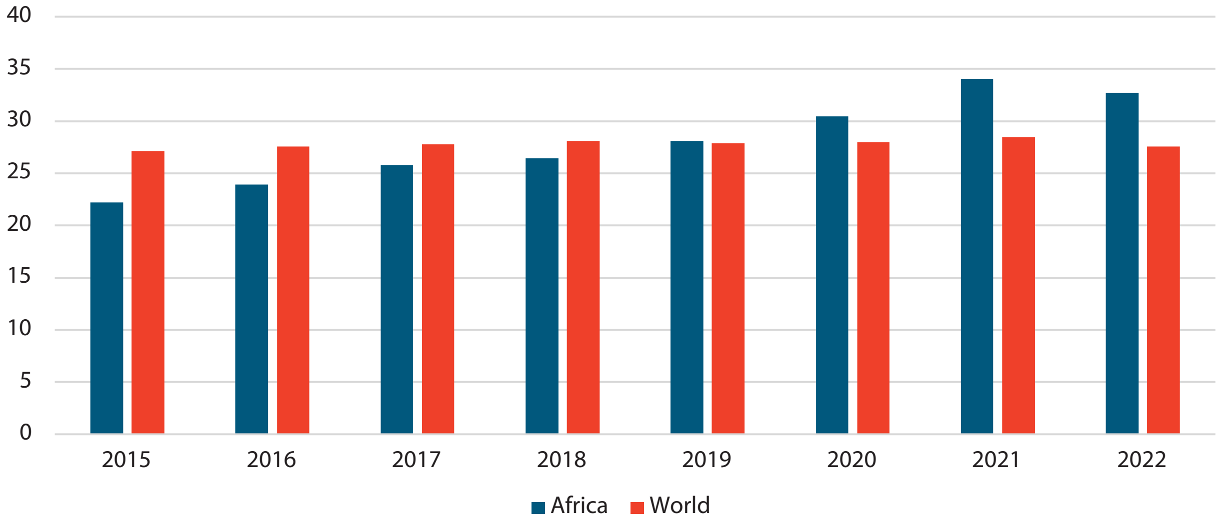
Source: UNDP Libya (2024)

fostering inclusive economic growth and ensuring that decision-making reflects diverse perspectives. This is pivotal in shaping organizational strategies, policies and overall business performance.

Globally as indicated in Figure 3.8 below, the proportion of women in managerial positions has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 27.15 percent in 2015 and 27.54 percent in 2022. There was a slight decrease from 28.5 percent in 2021 to 27.54 percent in 2022, indicating a minor dip in global progress.

In contrast, the proportion of women in managerial positions in Africa has seen a steady increase over the years, from 22.23 percent in 2015 to 32.7 percent in 2022, as indicated in Figure 3.8 below. This represents a positive growth trend of 10.47 percentage points over the eight-year period.

Figure 3.8: Proportion of women in managerial positions



Source: Author's elaboration based on data from the Sustainable Development Goal Indicator Database.

3.1.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

Table 3.7: SDG Target 5.6 and Indicators 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 5.6: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences Indicator 5.6.1: Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care 5.6.2: Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education	Not aligned

Women's access to reproductive health and rights remains uneven across the continent

Access to sexual and reproductive health services significantly improves women's health by reducing maternal mortality and morbidity, leading to healthier, more productive women who contribute to the workforce and economic growth. When women have control over their reproductive health, they can better balance careers and family life, enhancing job stability and overall economic contributions.

Women's access to reproductive health and rights remains uneven across the continent. In Africa, only 38.8 percent of women aged 15-49 who are married or in a union can make decisions regarding their sexual reproductive health rights.[29] There is significant disparities across the countries as indicated in Figure 3.9 below.

Globally, only 55 percent of women aged 15 to 49 who are married or in a union make their own decisions regarding SRHRs, based on data from 57 countries (UNFPA, 2009).

While the recent increase in contraceptive use among married women aged 15-49 in Africa—from 31.9 percent in 2021 to 33.5 percent in 2024—is commendable, the continent still ranks low globally in access to reproductive health and rights (UNDESA, 2024).[30] The unmet demand for contraceptives has slightly declined from 24.2 percent to 23.7 percent, and the satisfied demand has risen from 56.8 percent to 58.6 percent. These figures highlight persistent challenges in providing adequate reproductive health services, underscoring the need for continued efforts to improve women's access to health care and address barriers to contraceptive use.

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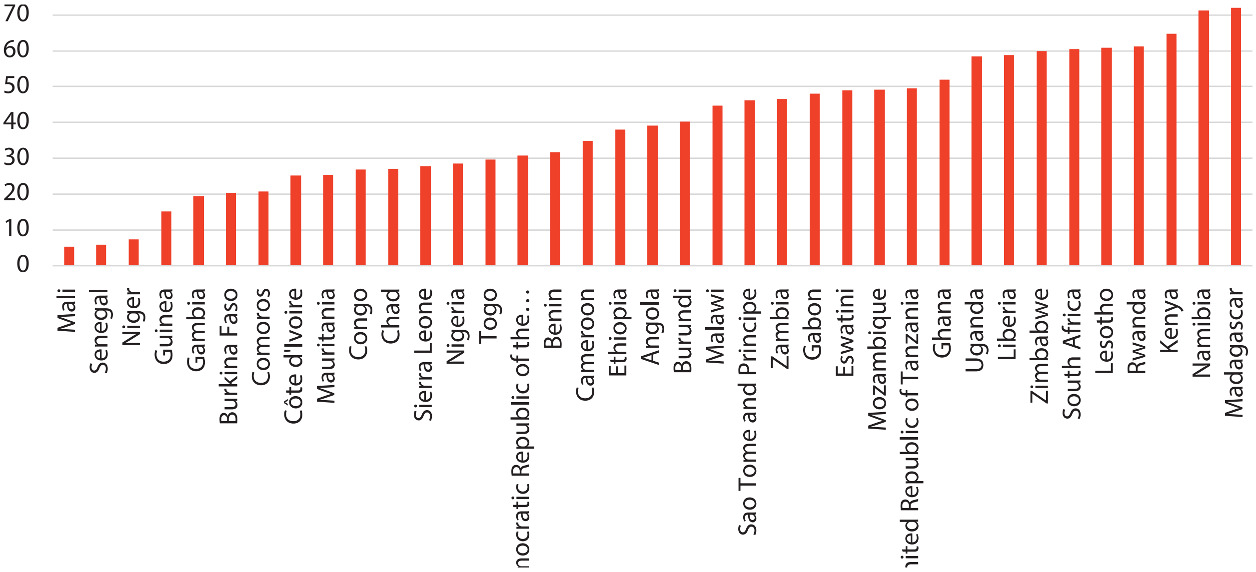
[29] ECA calculations based on latest available data for each country from DESA (DESA, 2024b) and World Population Prospects 2024 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2024)

[30]

Figure 3.9: Women who are married or in a union aged 14-49 who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care



Source: United Nations Population Fund, retrieved on 20 December 2024 from https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal, latest available data for each country

Many African countries have pledged to improve access to sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls, as demonstrated in the Beijing+30 review, where 37 nations reported expanding universal health care to reach marginalized groups. Efforts to address sexual and reproductive health, mental health, maternal health and HIV care are a priority for 35 countries. Education and training are key components of these efforts, with 22 countries introducing gender-responsive training for health care providers and 21 strengthening comprehensive sexual education in national curricula to equip youth with crucial knowledge on reproductive health. Additionally, 31 countries have initiated gender-specific public health campaigns, while 26 have focused on promoting male involvement in reproductive health to increase contraceptive use.

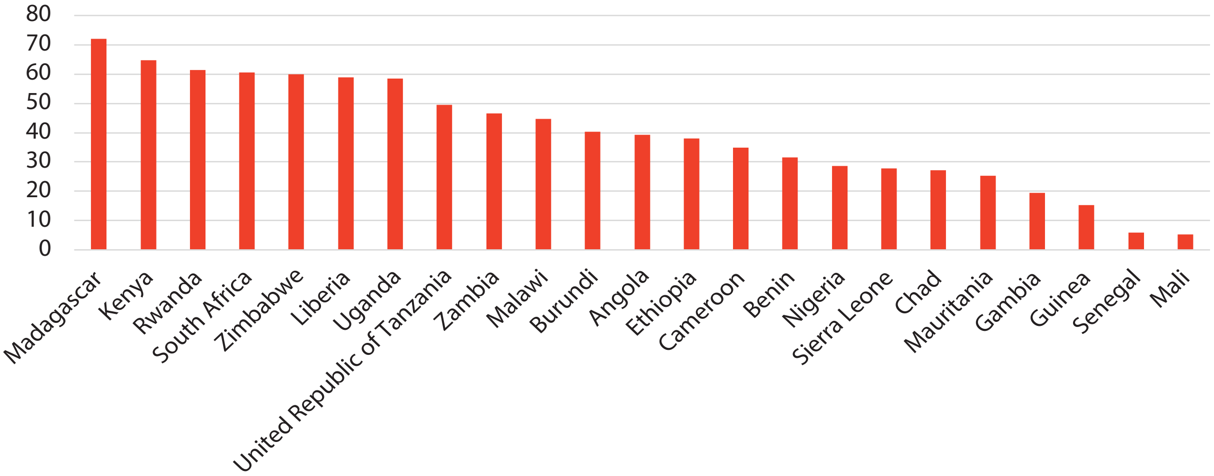
Countries such as Burundi, Cameroon and Rwanda are updating their national development plans to improve services related to adolescent pregnancies and maternal health. Notable examples include technological innovations in Rwanda on reproductive health and the strategic HIV/AIDS plan in Ethiopia, reflecting a broader commitment to addressing women's health needs through integrated approaches (see Figure 3.10).

Several African countries are also making progress in enhancing legal and policy frameworks to improve women's access to reproductive health and rights

Globally, as of 2022, approximately 73 percent of countries worldwide have enacted laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education (Statista, 2022).

Several African countries are also making progress in enhancing legal and policy frameworks to improve women's access to reproductive health and rights. Based on the 22 countries with available data, Africa has achieved 70 percent of the necessary

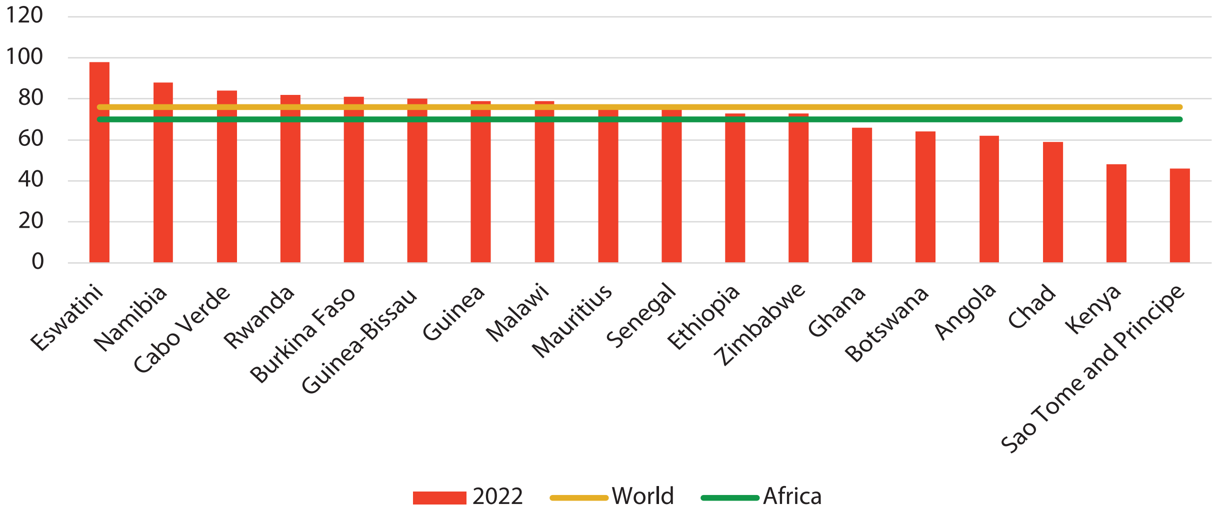
Figure 3.10: Contraceptive use and reproductive health care, selected African countries, latest available year (%)



Source: United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database: Note: owing to data limitations, this figure reflects the most recent data available from the period between 2015 and 2022.

laws and regulations to ensure full and equal access to sexual and reproductive health rights. However, significant regional disparities exist: Southern Africa leads with an average score of 86 percent, followed by West Africa at 75 percent. In contrast, East, Central and North Africa lag with scores of 67 percent, 59 percent and 57 percent, respectively.[31] These disparities highlight the need for targeted efforts to strengthen legal frameworks across all regions to ensure equitable access to reproductive health services for women (see Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.11: Extent to which countries have laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education, 2022 (percentage)



Source: United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database

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[31] ECA analysis using data from https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database

3.1.7 Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, land ownership and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources

Table 3.8: SDG Target 5.a and Indicators 5.a.1 and 5.a.2 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 5.a: Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws Indicator 5.a.1: (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure Indicator 5.a.2: Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control	Target 6.3.2: All women have rights to own and inherit property, sign contracts, manage business and own a bank account including land; Indicator 69: Percentage of AU Member States with legislation for women to own property

Several African countries have made significant strides towards advancing women's rights to economic resources through legal reforms, increased awareness and advocacy efforts

Strengthening women's rights to economic resources is crucial for improving their economic security, fostering job creation and promoting entrepreneurship, resulting in economic stability and growth. Secure land rights provide women with an asset base that facilitates their access to credit, enables long-term planning and reduces reliance on risky spending (Mienzen-Dick et al., 2019). Research indicates that women with property and inheritance rights earn nearly four times more income, thereby strengthening their resilience against economic shocks (Peterman, 2011).

Since 2015, several African countries have made significant strides towards advancing women's rights to economic resources through legal reforms, increased awareness and advocacy efforts, leading to a gradual shift in attitudes towards gender equality. Many countries have enacted laws that guarantee women's equal rights to inherit and own property, aligning with the objectives of SDG 5 and Agenda 2063. In the Beijing+30 review, 21 countries reported strengthening land rights and tenure security for women to improve their access to economic resources.

Despite these efforts, women in Africa continue to encounter significant obstacles in owning immovable assets, land and property. Only 15.1 percent of agricultural holders are female in Africa.[32] This highlights the urgent need to break down the existing cultural and legal barriers (Piedrahita et al., 2024). There are significant variations in the percentage of women holding land rights in the region, with rates as low as 1 percent in Mali and as high as 73 percent in Ethiopia. In Malawi and Eswatini, land ownership rights are disproportionately favourable to women as indicated in Figure 3.12 below.

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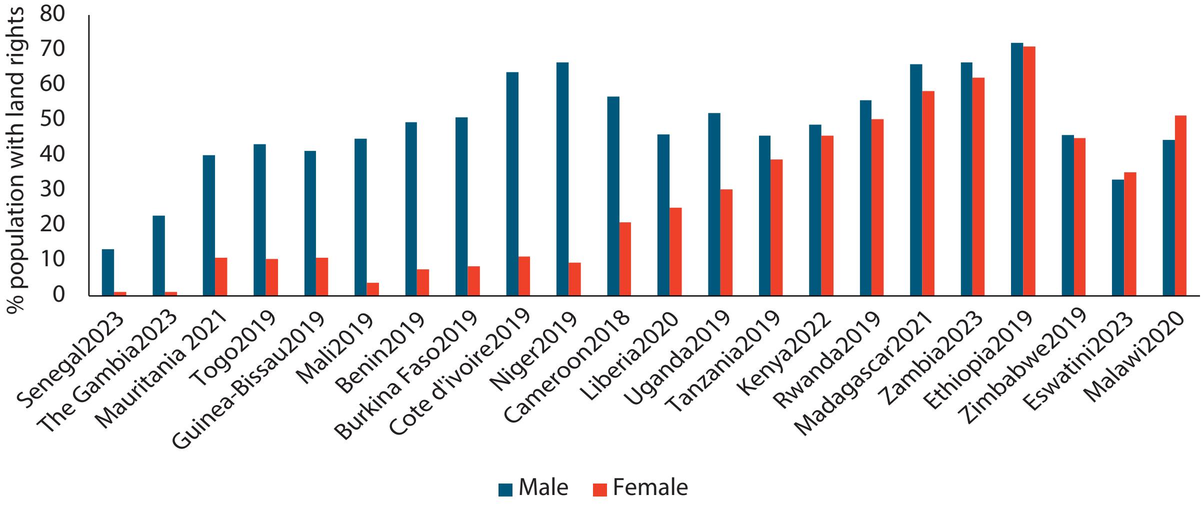
[32] based on data from 20 countries in Africa, data provided by FAO (FAO, 2010) and calculated by the ECA

Figure 3.12: Share of agricultural population with land rights by sex, Africa, 2023



Source: FAO, retrieved from https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database

Customary laws often undermine statutory laws guaranteeing women's inheritance rights in many African countries. However, several countries are implementing progressive reforms to ensure fair inheritance practices

In many African countries, customary laws often undermine statutory laws guaranteeing women's inheritance rights. However, efforts in several countries, including Kenya, Rwanda and Ethiopia, have seen progressive reforms to ensure fair inheritance practices. Despite this, nearly 70 percent of the 21 countries with available data on women's land ownership and control from 2019 to 2022 lack sufficient legal protection.[33]

The persistent disparity in landownership limits women's ability to use property as collateral for loans, restricting their access to capital to start and grow their businesses. The gender gap in financial inclusion in favour of men varies widely across Africa, with figures ranging from just one percent in Rwanda (Access to Finance Rwanda, June 2024) to a striking 26 percent in Angola (FinMark, Trust, LBC, & MIRA, 2023). In Rwanda, initiatives such as the Umurenge Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCO) have made a significant impact and are supported by strong legislative frameworks that promote gender equality. These efforts have empowered women to save and access credit through financial literacy and entrepreneurship training programmes.

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[33] ECA analysis using FAO data on the degree to which legal framework, including customary land, guarantees women's rights to land ownership, retrieved from https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database

Table 3.9: SDG Target 5.b and Indicator 5.b.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

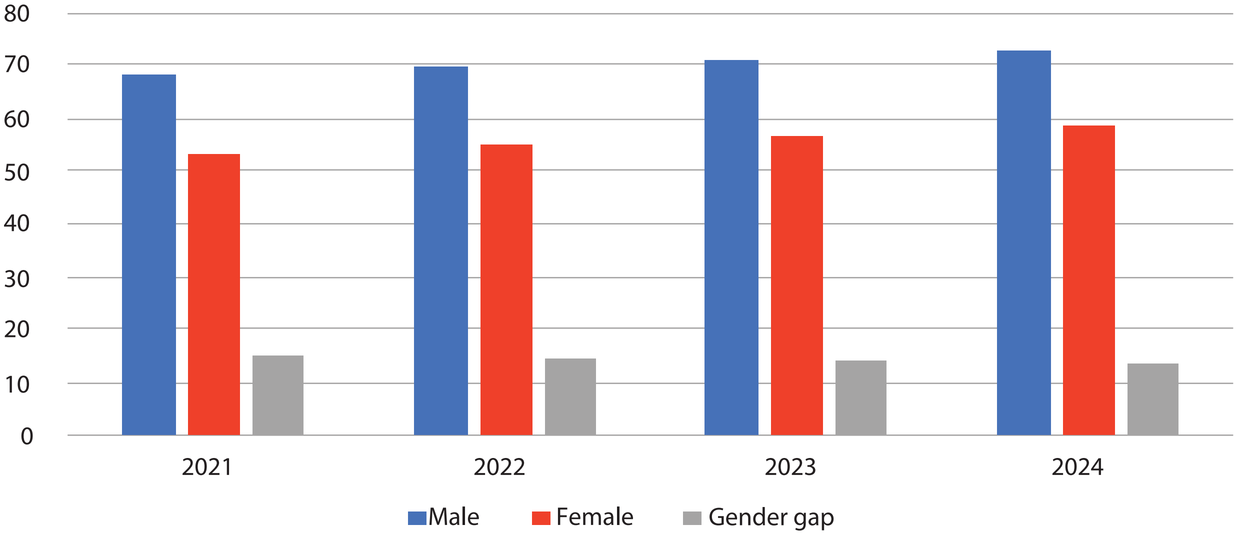
2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 5.b: Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women Indicator 5.b.1: Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex	Not aligned

Digital platforms are empowering women entrepreneurs by offering tools for starting and growing businesses

Digital technologies are reshaping the job market by generating new opportunities in e-commerce, digital marketing, and tech development. By utilizing technology to build platforms that connect women with resources, networks, and training opportunities, we can boost their economic participation and promote more inclusive job markets. These digital platforms empower women entrepreneurs by offering essential tools for starting and growing businesses, thereby contributing to economic diversification and job creation.

While mobile phone ownership and Internet usage among women and men in Africa increased between 2020 and 2024, notable gender gaps persist in these areas (Figures 3.13 and 3.14).[34] Despite progress, this persistent gender digital divide restricts women's access to technology and digital skills, limiting their full participation in the digital economy and hindering progress towards gender equality and women's economic empowerment. In 2020, women held only 31.2 percent of scientific research positions globally (UNESCO, 2023). Further, women comprised only 22 percent of global artificial intelligence (AI) professionals in 2019 (Ramos, 2022).

Figure 3.13: Mobile phone ownership in Africa by gender, 2020-2023



Source: ITU data available at https://www.itu.int/itu-d/sites/statistics/ (accessed on 26 September 2024)

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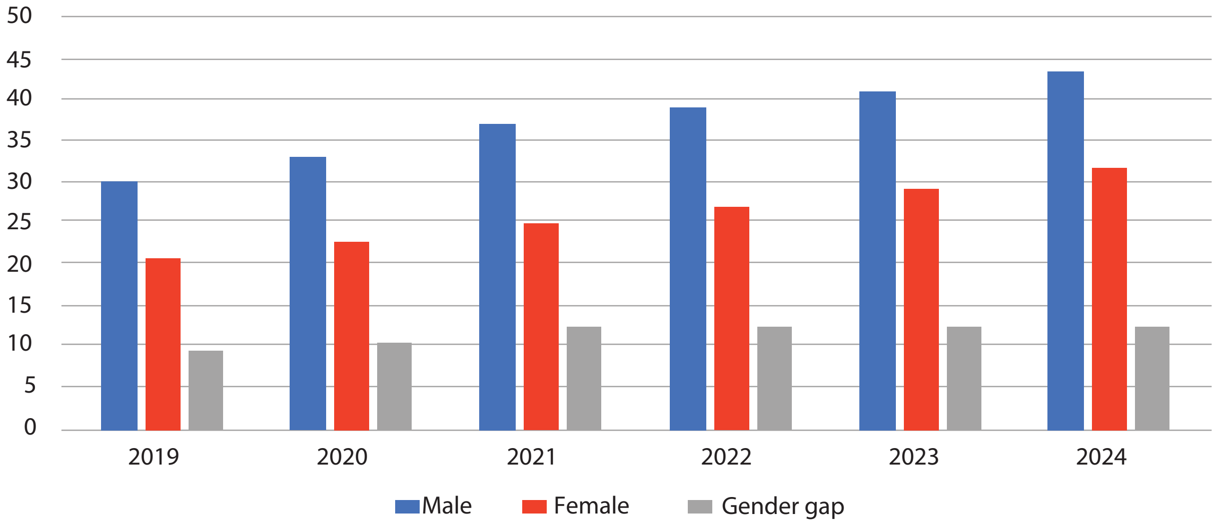
[34] ECA analysis based on ITU data Available at https://www.itu.int/itu-d/sites/statistics/ (accessed on 26 September 2024).

Figure 3.14: Internet usage in Africa by gender, 2020-2023



Source: ITU data available at https://www.itu.int/itu-d/sites/statistics/ (accessed on 26 September 2024)

Notable progress has been made in implementing measures to bridge the digital gender divide

African member states have made notable progress in implementing measures to bridge the digital gender divide. In the Beijing+30 review, 30 countries reported initiatives aimed at improving women's digital literacy, while 27 promoted gender-responsive STEM education. Furthermore, 24 countries have incorporated gender inclusion into their national development plans, as seen in initiatives such as the Digital 2025 Plan from the Republic of Congo and the National Digital Economy Policy in Mali. Efforts to establish supportive environments for women's digital learning have been carried out in 21 countries, with 19 focusing on removing barriers to accessing digital tools.

To enhance connectivity, 14 countries have initiated universal access programmes, such as Community Information Centres in Zimbabwe and the Senegal Gender Digital Divide Reduction Support Project. To narrow the gender gap in STEM, 26 member states have implemented initiatives aimed at equipping girls with crucial digital skills. Countries such as Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda have introduced educational programmes, including STEM boot camps, to empower young women. These initiatives promote gender equality in the digital economy and increase women's involvement in technology and innovation across Africa. However, targeted efforts are still required to accelerate the closure of the gender digital divide on the continent.

Table 3.10: SDG Target 5.c and Indicator 5.c.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 5.c: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels Indicator 5.c.1: Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment	Not aligned

Many African countries have enacted laws to promote gender equality, with 41 countries having frameworks addressing gender-based violence and 48 having frameworks addressing discrimination

To foster an environment where women and girls can thrive, it is critical to adopt and strengthen effective policies and enforceable legislation that support their rights and opportunities. These frameworks should aim to eliminate discrimination, ensure equal access to resources, and create pathways for women and girls to participate fully in all areas of life.

Many African countries have enacted laws to promote gender equality, including those addressing GBV (41 countries), discrimination (48 countries) and harmful practices. Thirty-six African countries in the Beijing+30 review have developed national strategies or action plans for gender equality based on United Nations Human Rights mechanisms, CEDAW and the Universal Periodic Review recommendations.

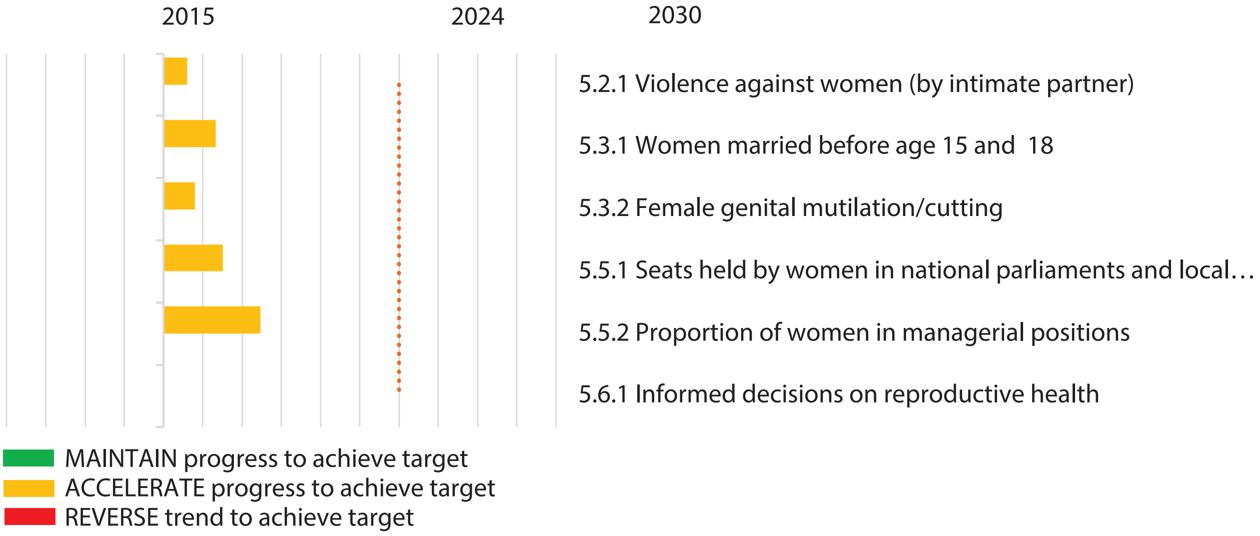
Several countries still struggle with data collection and analysis related to gender equality policies, which hampers progress tracking and resource allocation. Thirty out of the 39 countries in the Beijing+30 review have defined a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the achievement of the SDGs and started collecting and compiling data on gender-specific SDG indicators. Only 23 countries have systems to track and make public national budget allocations towards women's empowerment, and 16 have yet to adopt gender-responsive budgeting.

Globally, as of 2021, data from 105 countries indicated that 81 percent of them have established systems to monitor and publicly disclose budget allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment (UN Women, 2023).

3.2 Conclusions

Although progress has been made towards attaining SDG 5 and related Agenda 2063 strategic objectives, significant gender gaps still exist due to discriminatory laws and societal norms, limiting women's access to economic resources and opportunities. To achieve SDG 5 in Africa by 2030, African countries will have to accelerate progress in most of the indicators as seen in Figure 3.15 below.

Figure 3.15: Actions that must be taken on SDG 5 indicators for African countries to achieve SDG 5 and targets by 2030



Notes: The figures are colour-coded to indicate expected progress. Green is used for indicators with sufficient progress, where the target is likely to be achieved at the current pace. Yellow is used for indicators with insufficient progress to meet the target by 2030, and red is used for regressing indicators.

Source: ECA computations based on date from the SDG Global Database

Chapter 4

Sustainable Development Goal 8 – Economic growth and decent work

Key Messages

- Economic shocks, climate change and geopolitical instability are slowing progress towards SDG 8, with GDP per capita growth dropping from 2.7 percent in 2021 to 0.7 percent in 2023, and youth NEET rates exceeding 23 percent with gender disparities.

- At 2.89 percent, labour productivity in 2024 remained lower than global averages. Informal employment remained high at 83.1 percent and 71.7 percent of young people are in insecure jobs, while technical and vocational training participation is alarmingly low at 2 percent.

- People with disabilities have a 39 percent employment rate versus 56 percent for others, and child labour affects over 92 million children—44.5 million of them in East Africa alone, including many in hazardous work.

- The tourism sector accounted for only 6.8 percent of Africa's GDP in 2023, indicating missed opportunities for economic diversification and job creation despite post-pandemic recovery.

- Addressing poor industrialization, weak infrastructure and limited access to finance is essential. Support for MSMEs, innovation and resource efficiency are key to tackling persistent productivity challenges.

- Leveraging digital tools, the AfCFTA and inclusive financial systems can promote formalization, youth employment, gender equality and sustainable economic growth aligned with SDG 8 and Agenda 2063.

Table 4.1: Sustainable Development Goal 8 and related Strategic Objectives in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063 STYIP Strategic Objectives
Sustainable Development Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	Strategic Objective 1.1: Enhance inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic growth Strategic Objective 1.2: Increase economic resilience Strategic Objective 1.3: Improve agricultural productivity

4.1 Progress and prospects for the achievement of SDG 8 and related Strategic Objectives of Agenda 2063

SDG 8 seeks to advance "sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all". It is linked to two moonshots: Moonshot 1 – Every AU Member State attains at least middle-income status, and Moonshot 6 – Africa's Citizens are more Empowered and more Productive, and strategic objectives 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 of the STYIP of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want (African Union, 2024). Achieving SDG 8 will ensure that inclusive growth and development become a reality, with positive effects on the attainment of other SDG and Agenda 2063 goals.

Africa is slowly progressing with regards to in the achievement of SDG 8 and considerable action is needed to achieve the goal by 2030. There are some regressions, largely in the areas of economic growth, youth NEET and tourism-direct GDP (ECA, 2024a). Though variations exist, all sub-regions, except West Africa, are regressing and need to reverse trends to achieve SDG 8. Acceleration to achieve SDG 8 for Africa requires building resilience against climate-related and other economic shocks, scaled-up international support on growth and trade, economic diversification, promoting productive work across sectors, deepening private sector involvement in development including through public-private partnerships and leveraging digital transformation. This paper takes a close look at the progress and prospects towards achieving SDG 8 and associated Agenda 2063 goals, to promote an understanding of the status quo, and discuss what needs to be done to achieve these goals.

4.1.1 Sustain per capita economic growth

Table 4.2: SDG Target 8.1 and Indicator 8.1.1 and related targets and indicators in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 8.1: Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 percent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries Indicator 8.1.1: Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita	Target 1.1.1: Increase the 2023 per capita income to at least USD 3,048 Indicator 1: Real GDP per Capita Target 1.2.1: Increase the annual GDP growth rate to at least 6% Indicator 9: GDP growth rate

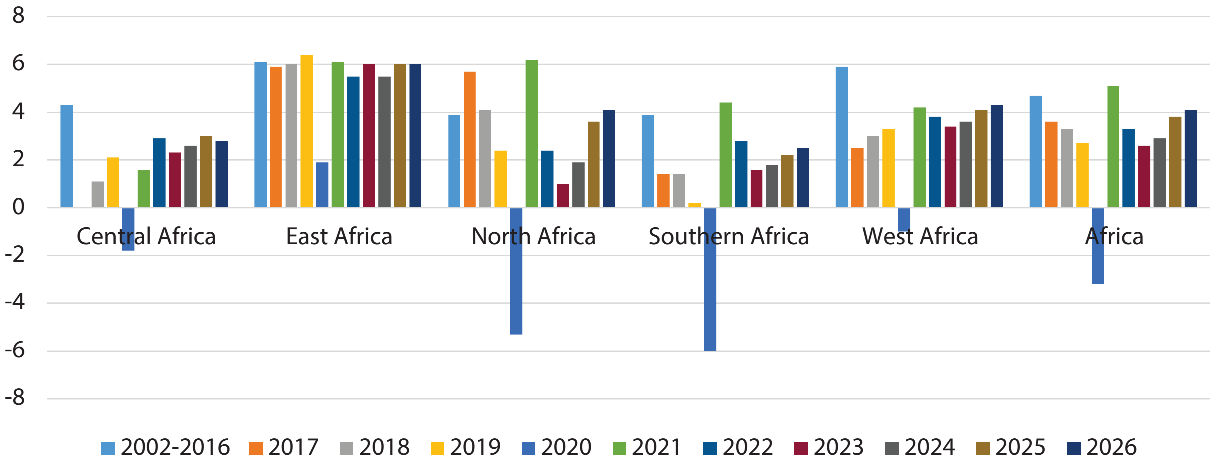
Africa's growth rate is expected to be above projected global averages in 2025 and 2026

African economies have been navigating growth imperatives in a complex, challenging and increasingly uncertain global economy. Governments are making difficult decisions to secure macroeconomic stability and finances in the face of high costs of living and hardships for citizens (IMF, 2024). All of this is happening against the backdrop of multiple crises including COVID, the Russia-Ukraine war, internal conflicts, climate change, and high costs of borrowing within a financially constrained environment.

Nonetheless, real gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to grow from an estimated 2.9 percent in 2024 to 3.8 percent in 2025 and 4.1 percent in 2026, higher than projected global averages of 2.8, 2.8, and 2.9 percent in 2024, 2025 and 2026, respectively (Figure 4.1). Within the continent, East Africa is growing faster than all other regions (ECA, 2025; UNDESA, 2025). Estimates show that the number of African countries among the world's top 20 fastest-growing economies could increase from 10 in 2024 to 12 in 2025, driven by greater than 6 percent real GDP growth from 2025 to 2026 in Benin (6.6 percent), Côte d'Ivoire (6.3 percent), Djibouti (6.9 percent), Ethiopia (6.6 percent), Niger (6.9 percent), Rwanda (7.1 percent), Senegal (8.6 percent), South Sudan (34.4 percent), Tanzania (6.1 percent), Togo (6.9 percent), Uganda (7.2 percent) and Zambia (6.0 percent) (AfDB, 2025) .

Continental growth rebound has been attributed to an increase in private consumption growth resulting from an easing up of inflationary pressures and the ensuing boost in household purchasing power. Nonetheless, this short- to medium-term growth might be impacted by global economic risks, geopolitical tensions disrupting supply chains, adverse weather patterns and elevated shipping costs, which could lead to an increase in food and commodity prices (ECA, 2025). Indeed, Africa's growth has historically been volatile, encumbered by key drivers including internal vulnerabilities such as inflation and investment, external vulnerabilities such as foreign exchange reserves and dependence on fuels, structural factors such as export concentration, and climatic factors such as rainfall (AfDB, 2025).

Figure 4.1: Real Gross Domestic Product, annual percentage change, 2002 – 2026



Source: (UNDESA, 2025)[1]

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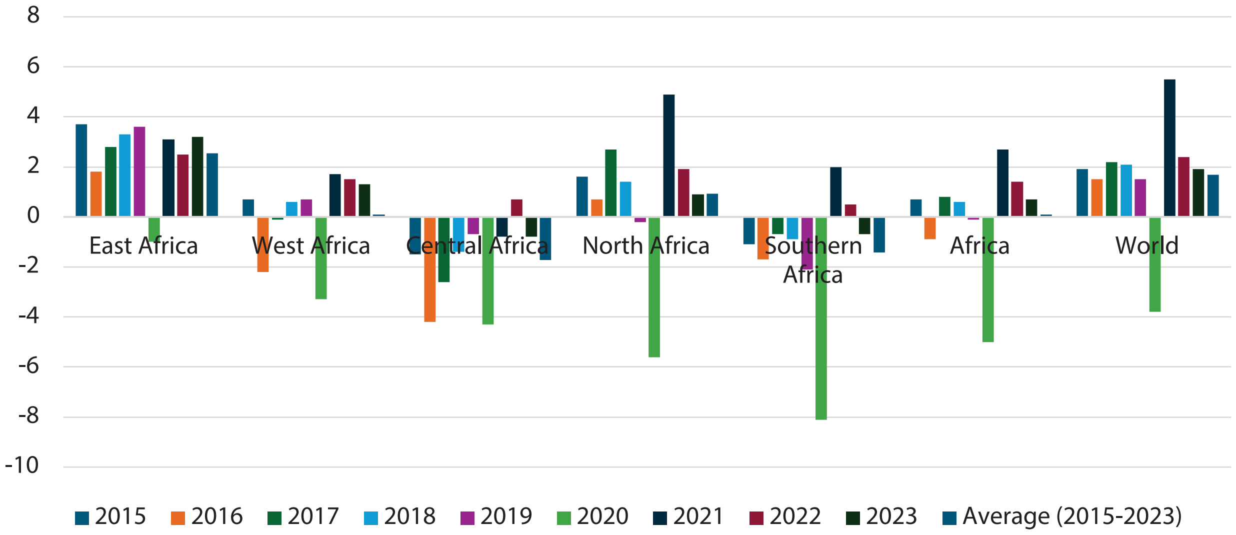
[1] Ibid.

However, productivity measured by the GDP growth rate per capita remains low

Nonetheless, annual GDP growth rate per capita remains low, averaging 0.1 between 2015 and 2023, compared to the world average of 1.69 during the same period. In 2021, the African annual real GDP per capita growth rate recovered, rising to 2.7 percent, but dropped again to 1.4 percent and 0.7 percent in 2022 and 2023, respectively (Figure 4.2).

There are variations among the subregions. From 2015 to 2023, the East, North and West African regions averaged 2.6 percent, 0.9 percent and 0.1 percent, respectively, while central and southern Africa had negative annual growth rates of real GDP per capita over the same period (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita (percent) – subregions



Source: (ECA Stats, 2025)

On a country level, Ethiopia (4.5 percent), Rwanda (4.3 percent), Sierra Leone (4.1 percent), Côte d'Ivoire (4.0 percent), Djibouti (3.8 percent), Guinea (3.5 percent), Somalia (3.3 percent), Egypt (3.3 percent), Mali (3.2 percent) and Seychelles (3.0 percent) showed the strongest average annual growth rates of real GDP per capita, with 3.0 percent and above over the same period. Overall, concerted effort is needed to accelerate economic growth to impact sustained and long-term development.

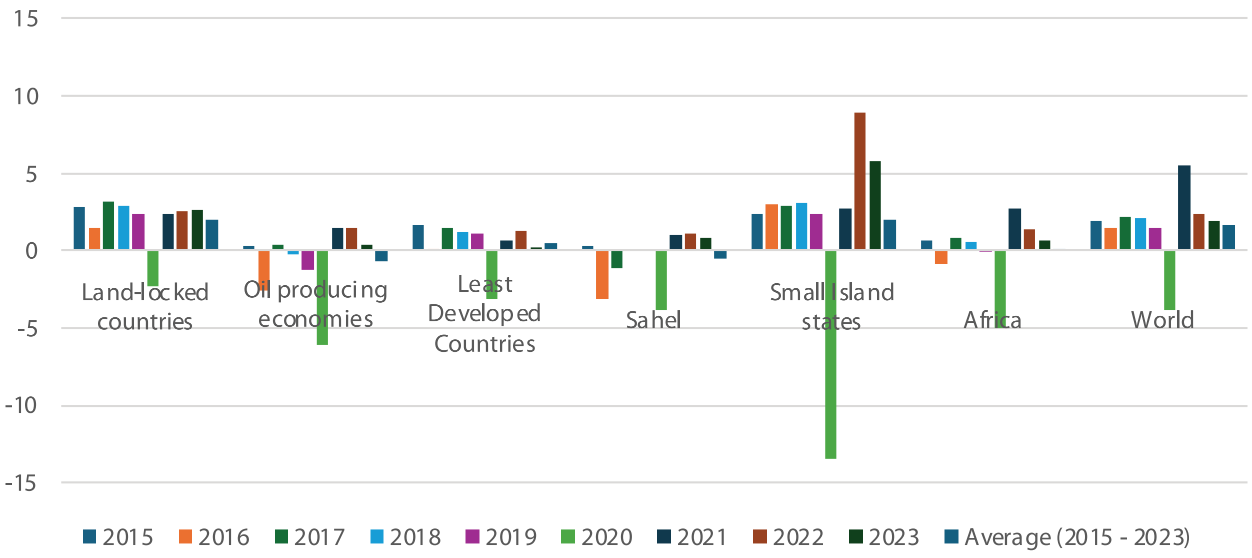
Average growth among LLDCs, SIDs and LDCs was greater than the African average from 2015 to 2022

Between 2015 and 2023, African Land Locked Developing countries (LLDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and LDCs grew at an average of 2 percent, 2 percent and 0.5 percent, respectively, better than the African average of 0.1 percent during that same period. SIDs which experienced a significant fall in annual growth rate of real GDP per capita in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, made a strong comeback, going from -13.5 percent in 2020 to 8.9 and 5.8 percent in 2022 and 2023, respectively (Figure 4.3).

Climate change is having a significant impact on African economies. Although Africa remains the lowest per capita contributor of global carbon emissions, accounting for less than 3 percent of global emissions, it is still highly vulnerable to its impacts. The 2024 ASDR notes that 52 percent of African countries have been impacted by climate change, with more than 110 million directly affected by weather, climate and water related hazards, resulting in an estimated US$ 8.5 billion in economic damages in 2022 (AfDB, AUC, ECA & UNDP, 2024a). The effect of climate change on jobs is also significant, leading to job losses in the one hand, and job opportunities on the other (see Box 4.1).

Climate-related displacement is also rising, impacting employment. For instance, in East Africa, 60 percent of internal displacements in 2019 were due to climate shocks, interrupting local labour markets (ECA, 2021a).

Figure 4.3: Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita – groups



Source: (ECA Stats, 2025)

Box 4.1: The impact of climate change on jobs in Africa

Climate change is reshaping the employment landscape across Africa, threatening traditional job sectors while simultaneously opening up new green employment opportunities. Agriculture, which employs approximately 62 percent of Africa's workforce, is acutely vulnerable (Tristo et al., 2022). With 95 percent of Africa's crops being dependent on rain-fed agriculture, climate variability—manifesting as droughts, erratic rainfall and temperature increases—has caused cumulative productivity losses of 31 percent since the 1960s. A temperature increase of between 1 °C and 2 °C could reduce the yields of key crops, including maize by 8 percent–22 percent, millet and sorghum by 17 percent and wheat by more than 20 percent, leading to significant job and income losses, particularly in rural areas (Trisos, 2022).

Informal work accounts for about 83 percent of total employment in Africa and is highly climate sensitive. This includes not only agriculture, but also construction and services—sectors affected by heat stress and seasonal disruptions (ILO, 2024). Gender and age dimensions compound this vulnerability. Women comprise over 40 percent of the agricultural workforce in 46 African countries and are disproportionately represented in informal, non-contracted jobs. These are often the first to be eliminated in climate-induced crises (ECA, 2020). Moreover, the continent is home to more than 72 million young people in Africa who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) – the majority of them are young women and or living in rural areas and are exposed to extreme weather events (ILOStat, 2024).

In addition to direct job losses, climate change has macroeconomic implications for employment. A 1 °C temperature increase is projected to reduce Africa's GDP by 2.2 percent by 2030, with West Africa losing up to 4.46 percent annually (ECA, 2023a). In addition, Africa is currently losing US$ 7-15 billion annually due to climate change. This figure could rise to US$ 50 billion yearly by 2030, representing up to 7 percent of Africa's GDP on average (AfDB, 2022), directly affecting job creation.

However, the green transition also offers a significant path forward, if managed justly. Sectors such as renewable energy, carbon markets, circular economy and sustainable forestry could support millions of jobs. For instance, Africa's participation in global carbon markets could generate up to 140 million jobs by 2050, if carbon credits are traded at US$ 100 per tonne (ECA, 2024a). Renewable energy development, especially solar and wind, already shows promise across countries such as Kenya, Senegal and Morocco. But without inclusive policies, particularly for youth and informal workers, there is a real risk of a skills mismatch and worsening inequalities.

To mitigate these risks and unlock new opportunities, Africa must focus on reskilling and upskilling workers, designing inclusive industrial policies, investing in labour-market data and implementing robust social protection and just transition frameworks. Only then can the continent transform climate challenges into drivers of decent work and economic resilience.

Contribution by Nadia S. Ouedraogo, 2025.

4.1.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity

Table 4.3: SDG Target 8.2 and Indicators 8.2.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 8.2: Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors. Indicator 8.2.1: Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person	Target 1.2.2: Increase the share of manufacturing value added to the GDP Indicator 10: Share of manufacturing value added to GDP Target 1.2.4: Diversify intra-African exports to at least 0.8 Indicator 12: Level of diversification of intra-Africa exports

Labour-force productivity is lower in Africa than across the world

Continuous and sustained economic productivity is important for prosperity gains and ending poverty in Africa. Increased labour productivity is fundamental for growing income levels, which can enable substantive consumption and investments in a country (Zeufack, 2022; African Center for Economic Transformation, 2023). Labour-force productivity which measures how much economic output is produced per every unit of labour, is lower in Africa than across the world (Figure 4.4). Following the COVID-19 outbreak, a negative annual growth rate of output per worker of -0.40 percent was recorded in Africa in 2020, compared to -0.69 percent globally. A quick recovery to 3.97 percent in 2021 and 4.18 percent in 2022, was followed by a downturn of 3.86 percent in 2023 and an estimated fall to 2.89 percent in 2024. It is projected that growth will rise to 3.48 percent in 2025, slightly below the global average of 3.78 percent.

Improved and efficient resource allocation is needed to improve labour-force productivity on the continent. Greater efficiency and productivity in the agricultural sector and among MSMEs, which employ a significant number of Africa's population will be crucial for improving Africa's labour-force productivity. Furthermore, increased access to technology, reliable and efficient infrastructure including transportation network, and stronger governance, property rights and regulatory systems will be essential.

Labour-force productivity is higher in East Africa than in any other region

Among the regions, East Africa, followed by North Africa has had the strongest annual growth rate of output per worker (see Figure 4.5). The African Center for Economic Transformation (2023) notes that enhancing agricultural productivity through improved land administration and governance has contributed to increased profitability and large-scale farming in some African economies. Furthermore, boosting employment through the use of labour-intensive models in highly productive industrial sectors combined with attracting key investors through promoting favourable policy environments has proved effective in improving productivity (see Box 4.2).

One key development framework that must be leveraged for Africa's growth and

Figure 4.4:

Annual growth rate of output per worker (GDP constant 2021 international $ at PPP) (%), 2015–2025

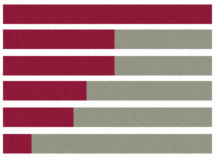
Key Highlights

East Africa
leads consistently *with*
5.4→7.5%
growth **(peaked at 7.5% in 2015)**

Global drop in 2020
World average fell to
-0.7%
(COVID impact)

Regional Comparison

(2023-2025 Projections)



East Africa	6.1%	→	5.9%
North Africa	3.5%	→	3.8%
World Average	4.8%	→	3.8%
West Africa	3.8%	→	3.2%
Central Africa	3.0%	→	3.7%
Southern Africa	2.4%	→	0.8%

Southern Africa *struggled most*
in 2020 **-9.0%** ***decline***

Notable Trends

East Africa
maintains
>5%
growth
throughout

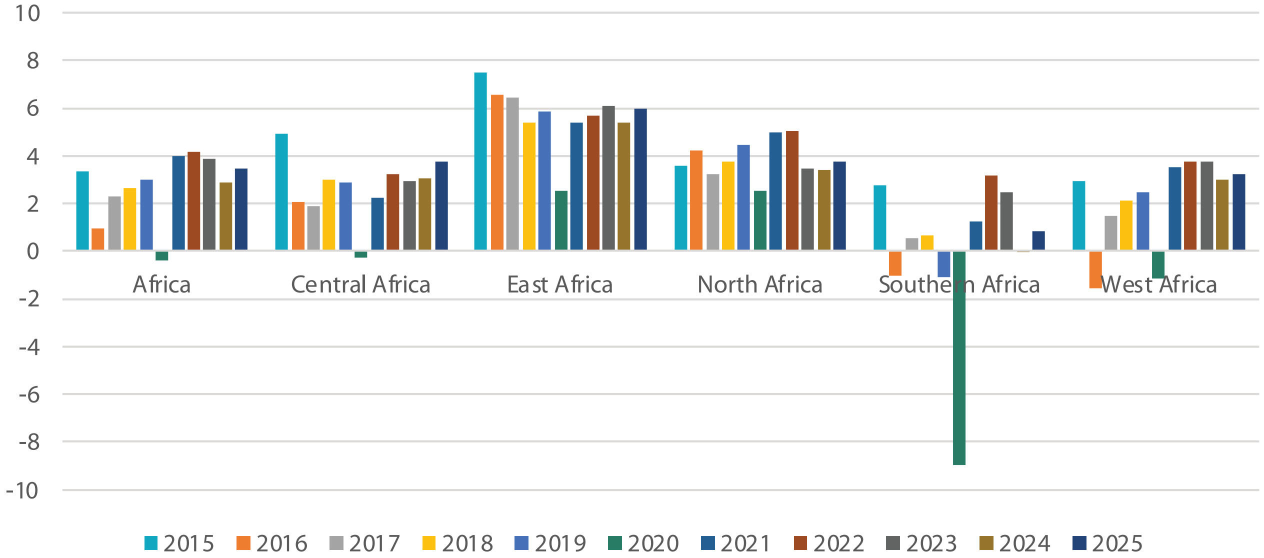
2022
Recovery

North Africa +5.1% &
East Africa +5.7%
rebounded fastest

Southern Africa
is the only region with
negative **2024 projection**
-0.07%

Global growth
stabilizing near
3.8%
by 2025

Figure 4.5: Annual growth rate of output per worker (GDP constant 2021 international $ at PPP) (%), 2015–2025, Regions



Source: (ILOSTATS, 2025)

development is public-private partnerships. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have been widely promoted as a solution to bridging the infrastructure gap and boost economic growth, which is necessary to achieve the SDGs (Lu and Wilson, 2024). These partnerships aim to leverage private sector capital and expertise to supplement limited public sector resources. In theory, PPPs offer a means of providing efficient, high-quality and cost-effective infrastructure. The infrastructure deficit in Africa is a major obstacle to economic development and the achievement of the SDGs. Africa faces an annual infrastructure financing gap of between US$ 68 billion and US$ 108 billion (AfDB, 2024).[1] This infrastructure deficit is considerable. Nearly 700 million people have

Box 4.2: Pathways to increase productivity

Kenya boosted firm productivity and financial inclusion through digital technology, notably its highly successful M-Pesa mobile money service. In Ghana, online platforms such as Esoko, Farmerline, and Trotro Tractor have enabled smallholder farmers to gain easier access to critical market insights and extension services through voice and text messaging.

Malawi revolutionized its land reform programme by drawing on the market-based approach used by Brazil, addressing ownership inequality and landlessness to diversify farming and increase agricultural production. Similarly, Senegal supported a comprehensive land reform programme through the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which shored up land development and improved the country's rice production. It also mitigated the impact of soil degradation in the Delta and Podor corridors through newly developed irrigable lands.

Source: The African Center for Economic Transformation (2023, p. 5).

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[1] https://euideas.eui.eu/2024/11/22/public-private-partnerships-in-africa-the-role-of-a-strong-and-responsible-

no access to electricity, 2.2 billion lack safe drinking water, 3.5 billion do not have safe sanitation facilities, one billion live more than two kilometres from a road that is passable in all seasons, and one-third of the world's population, some 2.6 billion people, remain disconnected from the digital world (World Bank, 2025).[2]

PPPs make it possible to mobilize private capital to accelerate investment in key sectors of the economy, while transferring certain risks to the private partner (World Bank, 2023). This requires reforms. The World Bank (2023) points out that four years of continuous improvements in reforms related to a solid institutional framework for PPPs would generate an additional 0.8 percent increase in GDP compared to the baseline scenario without reforms in Africa. In addition, PPPs also have a significant impact on job creation. According to the Global Infrastructure Hub report of 2021, each infrastructure project financed through a ppp in developing countries creates an average of 18 to 30 direct jobs for every million dollars invested, not counting the multiplier effects on indirect employment. In several African contexts, PPPs have supported the structuring of service and logistics sectors, strengthening the employability of young people and women. It is therefore crucial to articulate PPPs not only around sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, but also in relation to productive and decent jobs, as recommended by SDG 8 of the 2030 Agenda.

4.1.3 Support productive activities, decent jobs, growth and formalization of MSMEs

Table 4.4: SDG Target 8.3 and Indicators 8.3.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services Indicator 8.3.1: Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex	Not aligned

Informal employment remains predominant in Africa and the composition of this sector has been largely unchanged since 2015. On average, about 83.11 percent of workers were in informal employment in 2024, about 25 percentage points above the world average of 57.85 percent. This is relatively unchanged from 82.96 percent in 2005 with informality being higher among women than men. This is different from the world average where informality among men was higher than among women, at 59.6 percent and 55.16 percent, respectively in 2024 (Figure 4.6).

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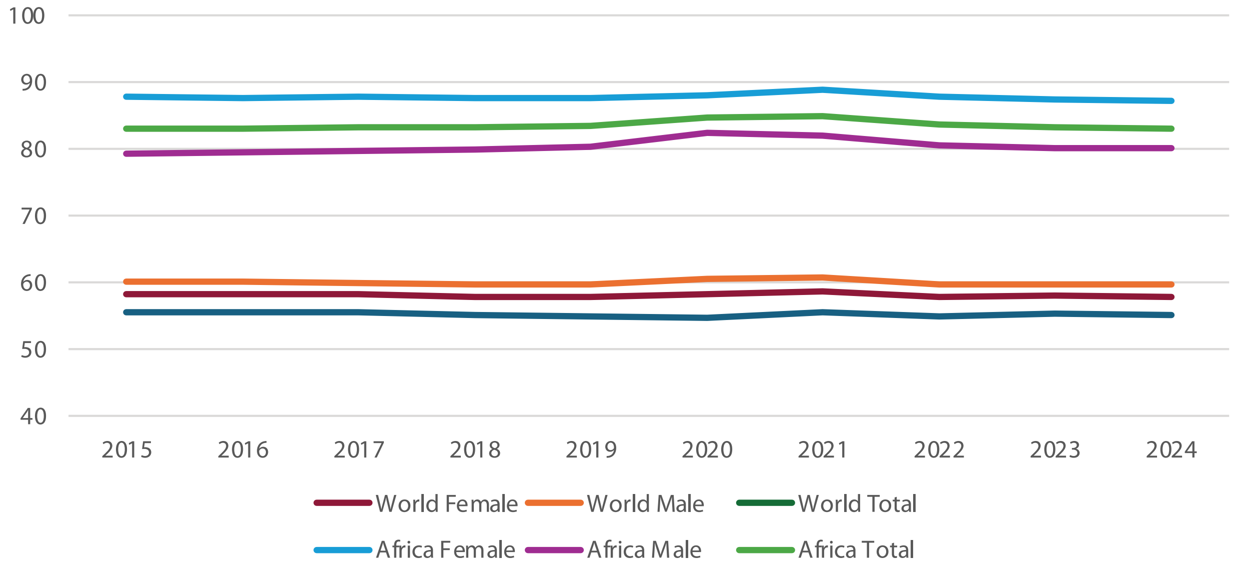
private-sector/

[2] https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/sustainableinfrastructurefinance/overview

Figure 4.6: Proportion of informal employment in total employment



Source: (ILOSTATS, 2025)

Regional disparities exist in informality in Africa. The East, Central, and West African subregions have the highest rates, consistently exceeding 87 percent since 2015. North Africa, followed by Southern Africa have the lowest rates of informality.

In addition to women, young people and those living in rural areas are particularly affected, reflecting deeper structural inequalities in labour markets. Workers in informal employment, often face high vulnerability, poor working conditions, job insecurity, underemployment, low productivity, and low wages (ECA, 2025). Most informal workers are also overrepresented in sectors such as domestic work, transborder trade and agriculture and, they face low wages, limited protections, and restricted access to essential services. Figure 4.7 reflects the subregional performances between 2015 and 2024.

In addition, many of those employed are not in decent employment. In 2023, about 29 percent of workers were living in conditions of extreme working poverty[3] in 2023, a proportion that has not significantly declined since 2015. The lack of productive, and decent jobs continues to hinder efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve inclusive growth across the continent.

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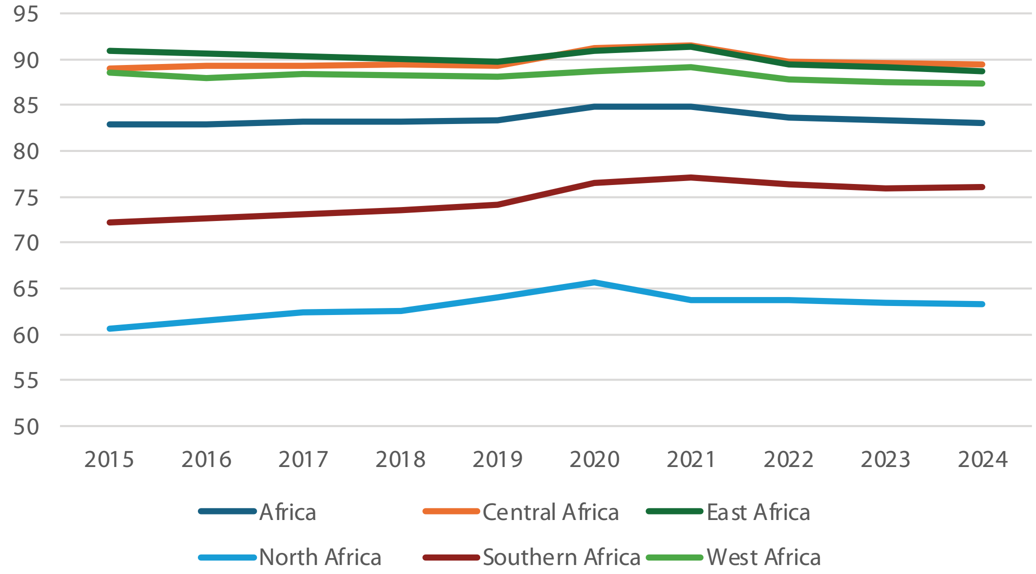
[3] Percentage of employed individuals living on less than US$ 2.15 per day (purchasing power parity)

Figure 4.7: Informal employment in total employment (regions)



Source: (ILOSTATS, 2025)

4.1.4 Improve global resource efficiency in consumption and production

Table 4.5: SDG Target 8.4 and Indicators 8.4.1 and 8.4.2 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 8.4: Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead Indicator 8.4.1: Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP Indicator 8.4.2: Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita, and domestic material consumption per GDP	Not aligned

Sustainable development entails balancing economic growth and societal development with environmental sustainability. As countries strive to grow and meet pertinent development needs, they need to ensure that this is done in a sustainable manner. Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) means “the production and use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardize the ability to meet the needs of future generations” (Oslo Symposium, 1994).

In the context of Africa, the ECA notes that:

> *Sustainable consumption in the African context refers to more efficient, better*

> *informed and less resource-intensive consumption, creating opportunities to meet basic needs for the ever-increasing population... For many poor people in Africa, the quality of their environment and of the natural resource base is a matter of survival. The challenge is to provide more people with a better quality of life without undermining the natural resource base and destroying the ecosystems on which everybody depends. More efficient resource use allows poor people to meet more of their needs - or consume more – from the same resource base.*

The 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP) was developed to provide a guide for regional and national initiatives for achieving SCP. SCP is based on six programmes: sustainable public procurement, consumer information for SCP, sustainable tourism, sustainable lifestyles and education, sustainable buildings and construction, and sustainable food systems (United Nations Environment Programme, 2025).

4.1.5 Achieve full and productive employment and equal pay for work of equal value for all

Table 4.6: SDG Target 8.5 and Indicators 8.5.1 and 8.5.2 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

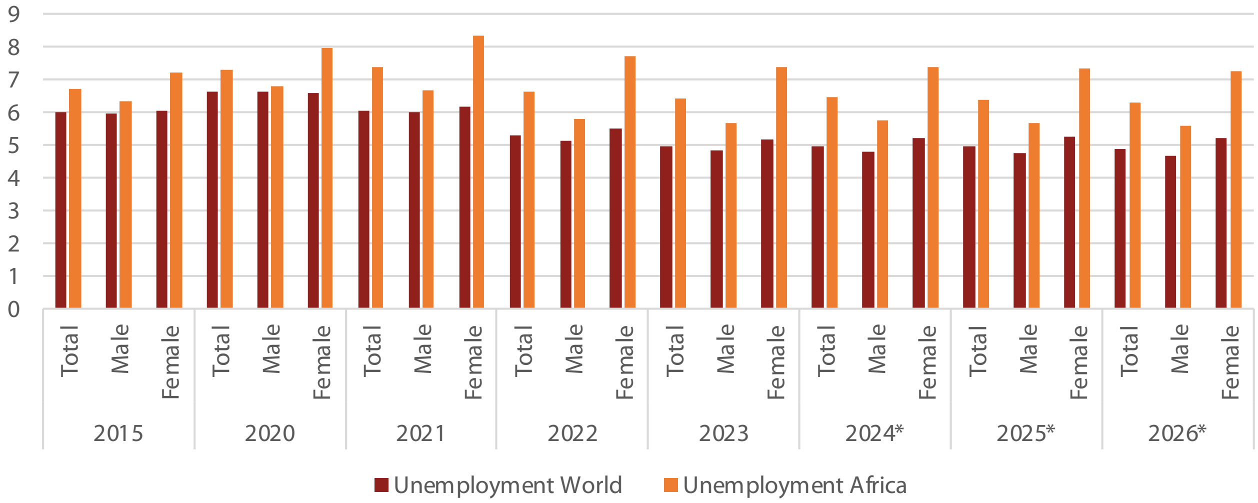
2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value Indicator 8.5.1: Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities Indicator 8.5.2: Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	Target 1.1.2: Reduce unemployment rates from 2023 value by 25% Indicator 2: Unemployment rate

Unemployment rates remain generally low in Africa, although higher than the global average - highlighting persistent issues of high informal employment and underemployment as well as structural challenges (see Figure 4.8). However, rates are projected to continue to decline after a modest uptick in 2020 and 2021 attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. Women generally fare less favourably than men in both in overall figures and in youth unemployment, explained by their unequal access to quality employment opportunities (Table 4.5).

Employment rates of people with disabilities, lagged behind those of people without disabilities, amounting to 27 percent of people with disabilities being employed in 2021 compared to 56 percent of people without disabilities (UNDESA, 2024b).

Youth unemployment remains a critical issue. Many young people in Africa need to take up any employment available to them to secure

Figure 4.8: Unemployment rates, 2015–2026

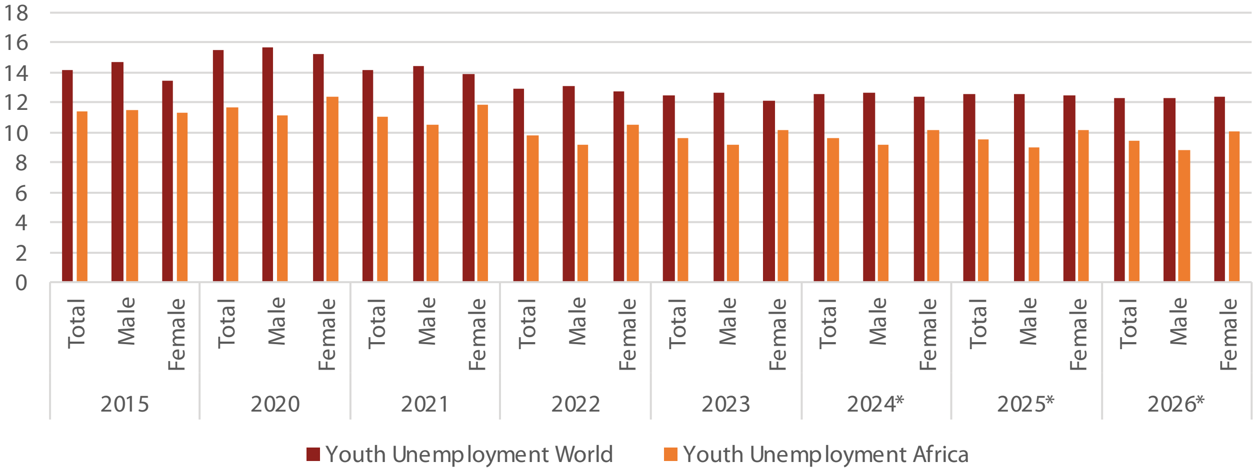


Source: ILOSTAT (Modelled Estimates, accessed on 9 December 2024).

their livelihood and find themselves in the informal economy and working poverty. The quality of jobs available to young people in Africa, excluding North Africa, is of significant concern. In 2023, nearly three-quarters (71.7 percent) of young adult workers (aged 25 to 29) were in a form of work that was deemed "insecure", representing a decrease of just 0.6 percentage points over the past 20 years; and one in three paid workers earned less than the median wage (ILO, 2024). In 2021, agriculture remained the primary source of employment for young workers in Africa, excluding North Africa (60 percent) and North Africa (28.3 percent), the highest proportion of all the world's regions (see Figure 4.9).

The low unemployment rate masks the magnitude of the unmet need for employment in Africa. The jobs gap (Table 4.6), a recent indicator introduced by the ILO, attempts to capture the entirety of the unmet demand for employment (UNDESA,

Figure 4.9: Youth Unemployment rates, 2015–2026



Source: ILOSTAT (Modelled Estimates, accessed on 9 December 2024).

2025). Persistent skills and qualification mismatches and low levels of foundational skills contribute to difficulties in finding jobs. In 2024, about 113 million people in Africa were interested in finding a job but did not find one, and only 39.5 million of them were considered to be unemployed.

People with disabilities face additional barriers when it comes to exercising their right to work and employment in the open labour market. They face lower wages, instability, lower standards of hiring conditions, and lack of accessibility in the workplace. They are also less likely than others to be appointed to leadership positions when formally employed.[4] The situation is worse for women and girls with disabilities, who may be forced to perform unpaid work or may face unique barriers in the workplace including sexual harassment, unequal pay, lack of access to seek redress due to discriminatory attitudes dismissing their claims, as well as physical, information and communications barriers.[5]

The low unemployment rate often masks the magnitude of the unmet need for employment in Africa. The jobs gap (Table 4.7) is an indicator recently introduced by the ILO, which attempts to capture the entirety of the unmet demand for employment. The jobs gap is considered a much better representation of labour underutilization than unemployment alone.[6] The jobs gap includes unemployed people and those who want employment but do not qualify as unemployed.[7] Persistent skills and qualification mismatches and low levels of foundational skills contribute to difficulties in finding work. In 2024, about 113 million people in Africa were interested in finding a job but did not get one. Only 39.5 million of them were considered unemployed.

Regional differences in the jobs gap rate exist, with North Africa and Southern Africa showing the highest jobs rate percentage (Figure 4.10).

Table 4.7: Jobs gap, 2015-2026 (millions)

	2015	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	2026*
	98.76	118.95	115.75	109.77	110.39	113.11	115.67	118.32
Central Africa	3.19	3.93	3.96	3.88	3.99	4.11	4.22	4.31
East Africa	21.70	30.38	29.50	29.07	29.74	30.74	31.60	32.42
	17.62	17.45	16.90	15.86	16.45	17.27	17.03	16.73
	19.08	25.61	26.89	26.80	26.63	26.49	27.25	28.11
	37.17	41.58	38.50	34.16	33.58	34.51	35.58	36.75

Source: (ILOSTAT, 2024a); *estimated

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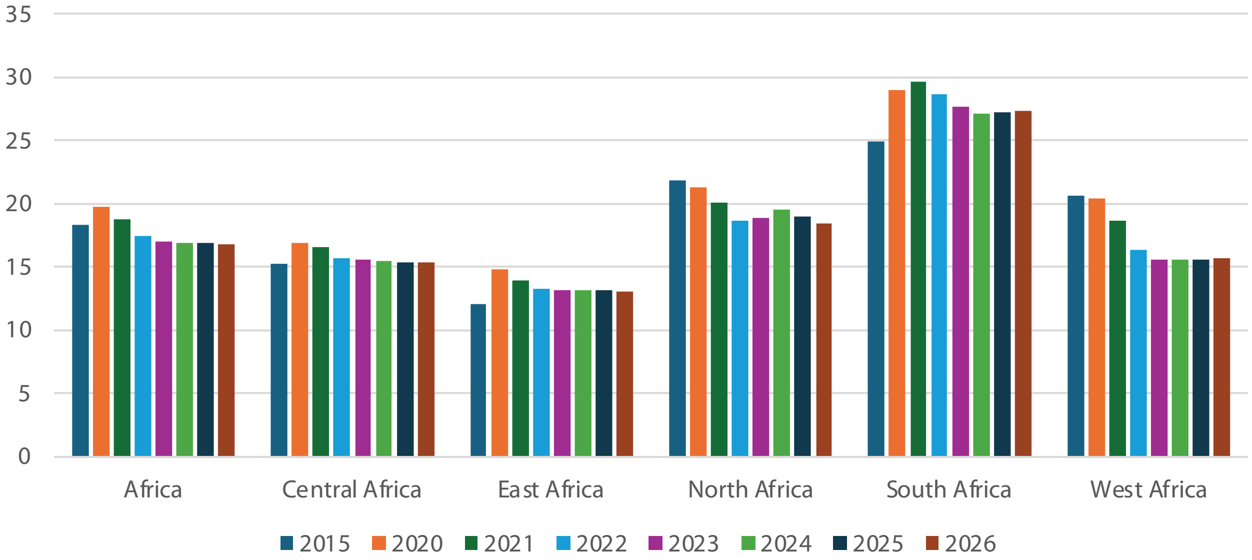
[4] Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General comment No. 8 (2022) on the right of persons with disabilities to work and employment (CRPD/C/GC/8), paragraph 4.

[5] Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General Comment No. 3 (2016) on women and girls with disabilities (CRPD/C/GC/3, para 58).

[6] An indicator recently developed by the ILO, the jobs gap, is considered an important complement to the unemployment rate. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40stat/documents/publication/wcms_912319.pdf

[7] This category would include, for instance, workers who are discouraged from searching because they see no possibility of obtaining employment and those currently unable to take up employment at short notice, such as people with family responsibilities.

Figure 4.10: Jobs Gap Rate, 2015 - 2026 (%)



Source: (ILOSTAT, 2024c)

4.1.6 Substantially reduce proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

Table 4.8: SDG Target 8.6 and Indicator 8.6.1 and related targets and indicators in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 8.6: By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training Indicator 8.6.1: Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training	Target 6.4.2: Reduce by at least half the proportion of youth Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Indicator 76: Proportion of youth Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Target 6.4.1: Reduce by at least half youth unemployment rate Indicator 75: Youth unemployment rate

Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training (Indicator 8.6.1)

Africa is the youngest region in the world, being home to 20 percent of the world's under-25. Africa's working-age population is projected to reach 600 million by 2030, and it is estimated that 37 percent of them will be young people (African Center for Economic Transformation, 2023 b). The lack of productive and decent jobs remains the biggest labour-market challenge for young people in Africa. In 2023, unemployment remained the top concern for African youth (Afrobarometer, 2023 b), and skills gaps continue to limit transformation in 70 percent of companies in Africa excluding North Africa, placing it 11 percentage points above the global average (World Economic Forum, 2023).

The ILO estimates that the percentage of young people NEET in 2024 in Africa (23.29 percent) was just slightly above the global average (20.4 percent), with only a slight decline from 2019 pre-COVID-19 rates (23.89 percent). Of particular concern is the persistently large gender gap in the young people NEET, pointing to the continuing disadvantages that young women face when transitioning from education to the labour market. This is crucial, as education and training remain fundamental for economic growth (see Box 4.3 below). While 17.1 percent of all young men in Africa were estimated to be youth NEET in 2024, the same was true for 29.6 percent of young women, a 12.5 percentage point gap. In North Africa, the difference between young women and men amounts to 25.4 percentage points.

An analysis of subregional trends in Africa reveals that youth NEET rates in Southern (34.0 percent), North (31.1 percent) and Central Africa (28.9 percent) were estimated to be above the region's average in 2024. The rates of youth NEET not in education, employment or training rates in West (19.2 percent) and East (20.0 percent) Africa were below average, although this is in many cases not a sign of better employment opportunities for young people, many of whom find themselves in working poverty or the informal economy (see Figure 4.11). Many countries such as Ghana (see Box 4.4 below) are working to improve the youth unemployment situation in their countries.

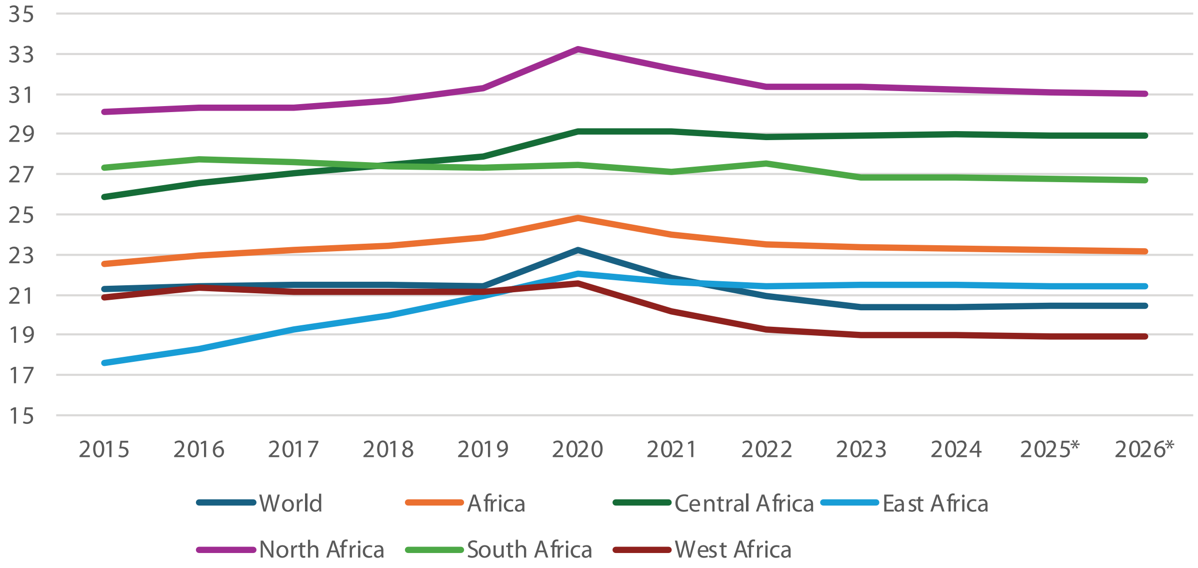
Despite being more highly educated than their elders—64 percent of youth (18–35) have at least some secondary education compared to 35 percent of those aged 56 and older—young people face significant

Box 4.3: The imperativeness of education as a determinant of economic growth and development

Education is a major determinant of economic growth, insofar as it contributes to the accumulation of human capital, a central element of endogenous growth models (Romer, 1986; Lucas, 1988). According to Lucas (1988), the accumulation of human capital stimulates individual and collective productivity, thereby generating positive externalities at the macroeconomic level. Romer (1990) reinforces this idea by showing that investments in knowledge and innovation, made possible by an educated workforce, are the main drivers of long-term growth. Consequently, African countries that invest heavily in education tend to experience more sustained and sustainable economic growth trajectories. At the same time, education acts as a crucial lever for employment, increasing the employability of individuals, particularly young people and women, by facilitating their integration into the labour market (Schultz, 1960; Becker, 1964; Mincer, 1974). Becker (1964) through human capital theory, asserts that more educated people have higher productivity, making them more attractive to employers.

Furthermore, each additional year of education is associated with a significant increase in income, particularly in developing countries (Schultz, 1960). This improvement in individual income contributes to aggregate demand, which can indirectly generate more jobs at the macroeconomic level (Mincer, 1974; Schultz, 1960). Ultimately, economic growth creates additional resources that the state can reinvest in the education system, while a better-trained workforce supports competitiveness and innovation, which are drivers of growth and employment (Romer, 1986; Becker, 1964). Furthermore, Aghion et al. (1998) emphasize that technological progress requires a continuous adaptation of skills, making education even more essential. Thus, a coherent economic development policy in Africa necessarily involves integrating education as a strategic pillar of development in line with the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

Figure 4.11: Youth not in education, employment or training rates by subregion, 2015 - 2026



Source: (ILOSTAT, 2025c)

challenges transitioning from school to work. A critical factor is the skills gap, with training-employment mismatches hindering employment opportunities.

In Africa, the percentage of young people aged 15-24 participating in technical or vocational education either in formal or non-formal (e.g. work-based or other settings) education is very low. Figure 4.12 below shows that the mean rate increased from

Box 4.4: Interventions to address youth employment challenges in Ghana

Ghana has implemented several strategies and programmes to address the challenges of youth employment. The National Youth Policy (2022-2032), developed by the National Youth Authority, focuses on empowering young people through economic and financial inclusion, entrepreneurship and skills development. The Youth Employment Agency (YEA) and other initiatives such as the Youth in Agriculture Programme (YIAP) and the National Entrepreneurship Innovation Programme (NEIP) aim to create job opportunities and enhance employability. These efforts are part of a broader framework to tackle youth unemployment and align with national employment strategies. However, challenges such as limited private sector involvement and gaps in programme evaluations remain.

Other government programmes that address youth unemployment (both short- and long-term) implemented since 2016 are the following:

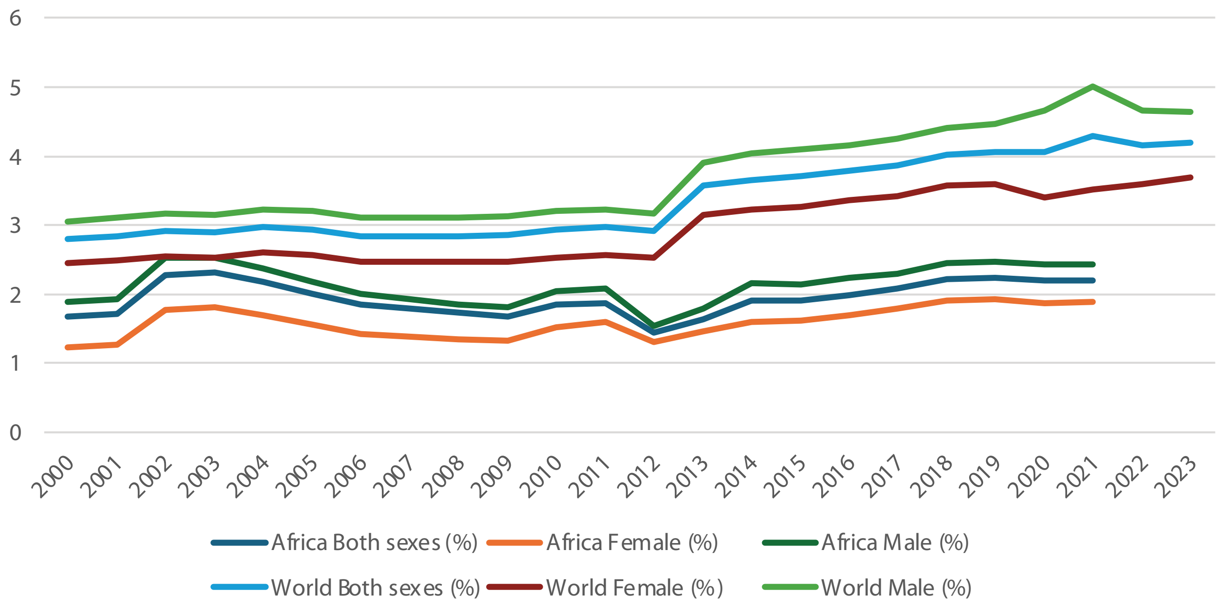
1. National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI)
2. Opportunities Industrialization Centre Ghana (OICG)
3. Youth Leadership and Skills Training Institute
4. National Entrepreneurship Innovation Programme (NEIP), previously Youth Enterprise Support (YES)
5. Rural Enterprises Programme (REP)
6. National Service Scheme (NSS)

Source: Government of Ghana (2025)

1.91 percent to 2.20 percent between 2014 and 2021 for the Africa as a whole. For most countries, the mean rate is alarmingly low, less than two percent, indicating very low participation in technical and vocational education as well as in informal or non-formal (e.g. work-based or other settings) education (see Figure 4.12).

In this context, skills development through effective technical and vocational education and training is crucially important. The importance of technical and vocational education and training is enshrined in SDG4 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25). Technical and vocational education and training can facilitate employability, training low-skilled and unqualified jobseekers, while offering employers the opportunity to find skilled workers and meet the needs of the labour market.

Figure 4.12: Proportion of 15- to 24-year-olds enrolled in vocational education, by region and sex (percent), 2015-2023



Source: UIS September 2024 data release

**Africa* data available only until 2022

4.1.7 Eradicate forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour

Table 4.9: SDG Target 8.7 and Indicators 8.71 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms Indicator 8.7.1: Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age	Not aligned

Child labour remains a persistent and pressing challenge across the African continent. More than one-fifth of children in Africa (21.6 percent) are involved in child labour, a two-percentage point increase from the 2016 estimates (ILO & UNICEF, 2021) and more than three times higher than any other region. With 92.2 million African children estimated to be in child labour (absolute numbers), there are more children in child labour in Africa than in the rest of the world combined (ILO & UNICEF, 2021). Furthermore, 9.7 percent of African children are in hazardous work, amounting to 41.4 million, the highest in the world. The agricultural sector contributes about 80.7 percent (74.4 million children) to total child labour statistics (ILO, 2021d). Sub-regional disparities are substantial, with the highest prevalence rate in East and West Africa. In East Africa for instance, 44.5 million children are engaged in child labour accounting for about 30 percent of all children in the subregion.

This phenomenon also appears to affect children from traditionally vulnerable and marginalized groups, including Indigenous children and/or those from rural areas, who often face specific problems such as debt bondage, domestic servitude and other forms of abuse, exploitation or manipulations by labour intermediaries or other actors (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2018).

Despite these challenges, African countries remain committed to eradicating child labour. Following the adoption of a ten-year continental action plan by the African Union in 2020 and the universal ratification of the ILO's Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), significant progress has been made. In May 2022, the Durban Call to Action was adopted, focusing on SDG Target 8.7 to eliminate child labour by 2025 through efforts in agriculture, education, social protection, and international cooperation (ILO, 2022). Since then, initiatives have included a 2023 AU-ILO regional Conference on supply chains, training for African labour statisticians, and policy revisions in countries like Kenya, Mali, and Uganda. In Nigeria, child labour desk officers were appointed nationwide, and monitoring systems were established in high prevalence communities (ILO and the Nigeria National Bureau of Statistic, 2024). Additionally, a 2024 consortium led by the

AU, ILO, UNICEF, and IOM aims to create a continental response to combat child labour and support vulnerable children (African Union, 2024).

4.1.8 Protect labour rights, and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers

Table 4.10: SDG Target 8.8 and Indicators 8.8.1 and 8.8.2 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 8.8: Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment Indicator 8.8.1: Fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers, by sex and migrant status Indicator 8.8.2: Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status	Not aligned

In Africa, workplace accidents, whether fatal or non-fatal, remain largely under-reported but are still a cause for concern, with significant regional disparities (ILO, 2019). In East Africa, non-fatal accidents peaked at 776.49 per 100,000 workers in 2019 (Figure 4.13b), while fatal accidents are estimated at between 10 and 16 per 100,000 (Figure 4.13a), which is higher than the global average (ILO, 2019). In North Africa, the average number of non-fatal accidents over the period 2015–2023 is 449.3, a relatively lower figure thanks to more developed social security systems, although fatal accidents remain high (3.9 per 100,000). Southern Africa has lower rates overall, while data are unavailable for West and Central Africa, limiting the scope of the analysis. Furthermore, men are particularly exposed to occupational risks, accounting for more than 85 percent of work-related deaths, due to their strong presence in dangerous sectors such as mining, construction, and transportation (Ishengoma, 2024; ILO, 2013). In East Africa, men are the main victims of accidents, unlike women, who are less exposed.

However, the lack of gender-disaggregated data in several regions, particularly due to the prevalence of the informal economy, complicates accurate assessment. Migrant workers are among the most vulnerable groups, particularly in North and Southern Africa (UNECA, 2024).[8] According to the IOM (2024), they are often employed in high-risk sectors, such as intensive agriculture in Morocco or construction in South Africa, without adequate social protection or coverage in the event of an accident at work. In North Africa, irregular sub-Saharan migrants suffer from excess

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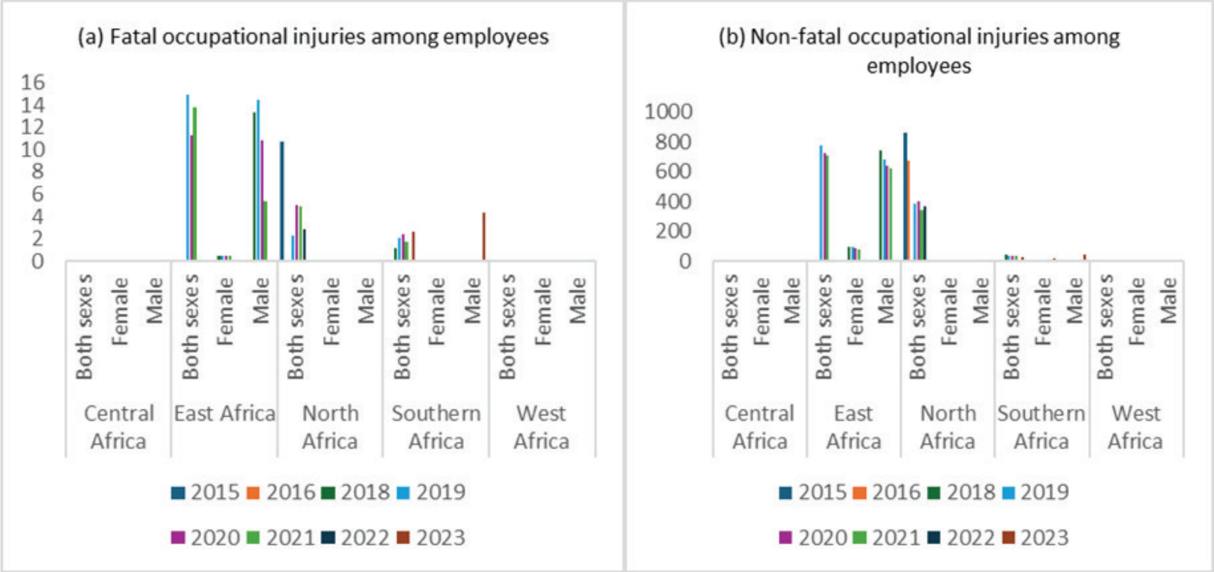
[8] https://knowledgehub-sro-na.uneca.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Policy-Brief-Migration-in-Africa-statistics-and-recognition-of-migrants-skills-2024-En.pdf

occupational mortality, exacerbated by the lack of reporting mechanisms (UNECA, 2024). Similarly, in the Sahel countries, internal or regional migrants are often excluded from insurance schemes and deprived of appropriate protective equipment. Considering this situation, it is crucial to improve systems for collecting data disaggregated by sex, region, and migration status, and to strengthen occupational health and safety standards to progress towards achieving target 8.8.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa (see Figure 4.13).

Respect for labour rights, particularly freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, varies greatly across countries and regions in Africa. According to ILO's 2025[9] report on freedom of association, some countries have legal frameworks that are broadly aligned with Conventions 87 and 98, but limitations remain in implementation, particularly in contexts of political tension. Based on Figure 4.14, North Africa has the highest levels of compliance, with a score of 5.39 in 2023, higher than the African average (2.67) and the global average (4.86), while Central Africa lags due to a weak trade union tradition and frequent conflicts between unions and employers. Furthermore, gender disparities in trade union rights are a cause for concern (ILO, 2025). Although women are present in large numbers in key sectors such as agriculture, textiles, and informal trade, they are less likely to be unionized and are often excluded from leadership positions due to structural barriers related to motherhood, unpaid work, and fear of reprisals (ILO, 2022). In West Africa, the predominance of the informal economy exacerbates their difficulty in accessing collective bargaining.

Migrant workers, particularly in North and Southern Africa, are among the most excluded from labour rights (UNECA, 2024). In North Africa, migrants are often excluded from trade unions and collective bargaining agreements (IOM, 2024), while in Southern Africa, despite legislation allowing them to

Figure 4.13: Fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers, by sex and migrant status



Source: UNDESA (2024)

Source: UNDESA (2024)

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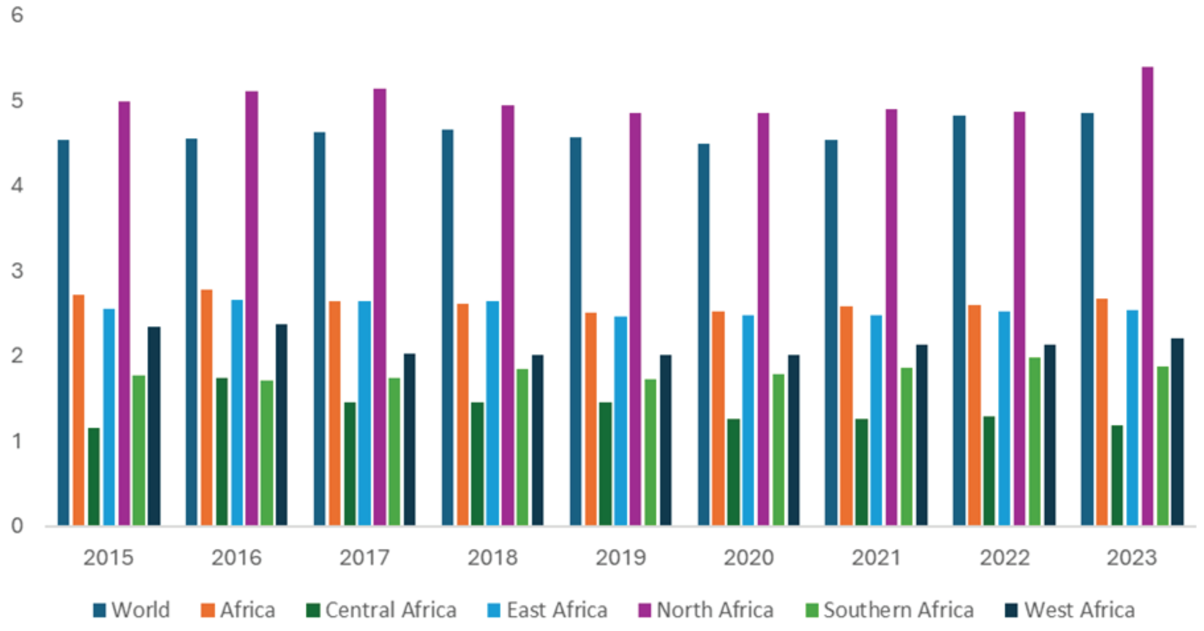
[9] https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/Report%20III%28A%29-2025-%5BNORMES-241219-002%5D-EN.pdf

Figure 4.14: Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining)



Source: UNDESA (2024)

unionize—as in South Africa—discriminatory practices limit their effective participation. More broadly, migrants in irregular situations or on temporary contracts are deprived of freedom of association in most African countries (ILO and OECD, 2023)[10]. To strengthen SDG indicator 8.8.2, it is imperative that African states harmonize their legislation with ILO standards and improve the collection of data disaggregated by sex, migration status, and region, to ensure the effective and inclusive application of trade union rights (see Figure 4.14).

4.1.9 Promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and protects local culture and products

Table 4.11: SDG Target 8.9 and Indicator 8.9.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 8.9: By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products Indicator 8.9.1: Tourism-direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate	Not aligned

The tourism sector is a key contributor to GDP and employment in several African countries. In 2023, the sector contributed 6.8 percent to Africa's total GDP, an increase of over 13 percent from 2022 and generated around 5.0 percent of total employment on the continent (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2024) (see Figure 4.15).

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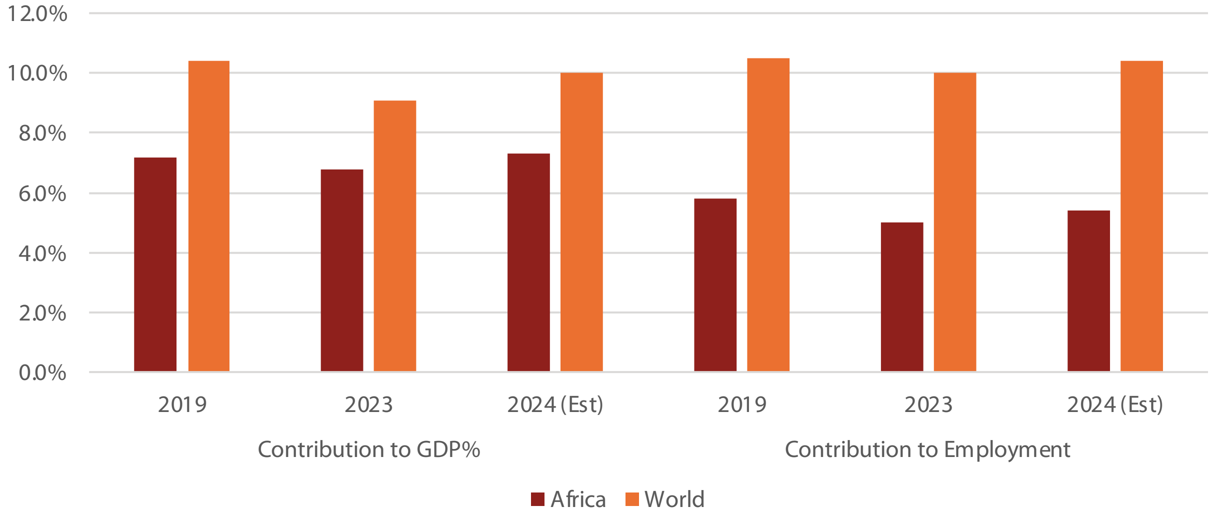
[10] https://g20ewgportal.org/downloads/g20_lemm_2023_-_womenwork_by_ilo_oecd.pdf

Figure 4.15: Contribution of tourism to GDP and employment (%)



Source: UNDESA

Seychelles and Mauritius particularly benefit from this industry, with respective contributions of 52.1 percent and 20.4 percent to GDP, and high employment rates in the sector, reaching 52.7 percent and 13.5 percent in 2023. This strong reliance on tourism highlights the importance of the sector for local economies, where it often serves as the main source of income and employment (Figure 4.16 and 4.17). However, heavy reliance on tourism and imports by SIDS and other countries means they are highly vulnerable to external shocks such as climate change, COVID-19 and conflicts (Assa & Meddeb, 2021).

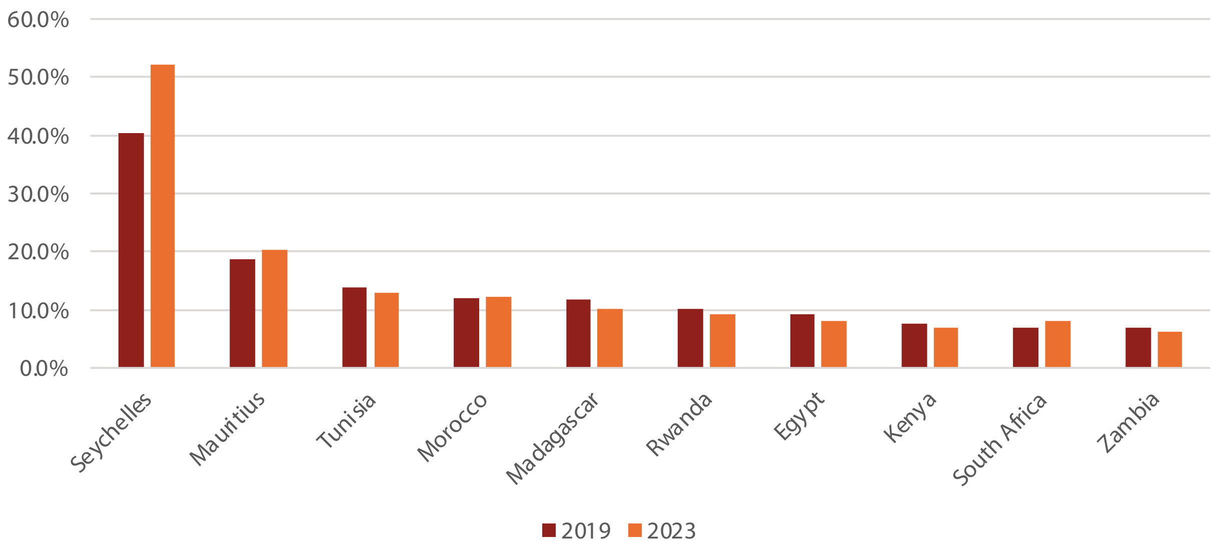
4.1.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions

Table 4.12: SDG Target 8.10 and Indicators 8.10.1 and 8.10.2 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 8.10: Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all Indicator 8.10.1: (a) Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults and (b) number of automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults 8.10.2: Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile money service provider	Not aligned

The AAAA underscores the critical role of financial inclusion in sustainable development and advocates for strengthening domestic financial institutions and capital markets. In Africa, significant progress has been made in expanding access to financial services,

Figure 4.16: Contribution to GDP (%) of the travel and tourism sector in selected African countries, 2023



Source: (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2024)

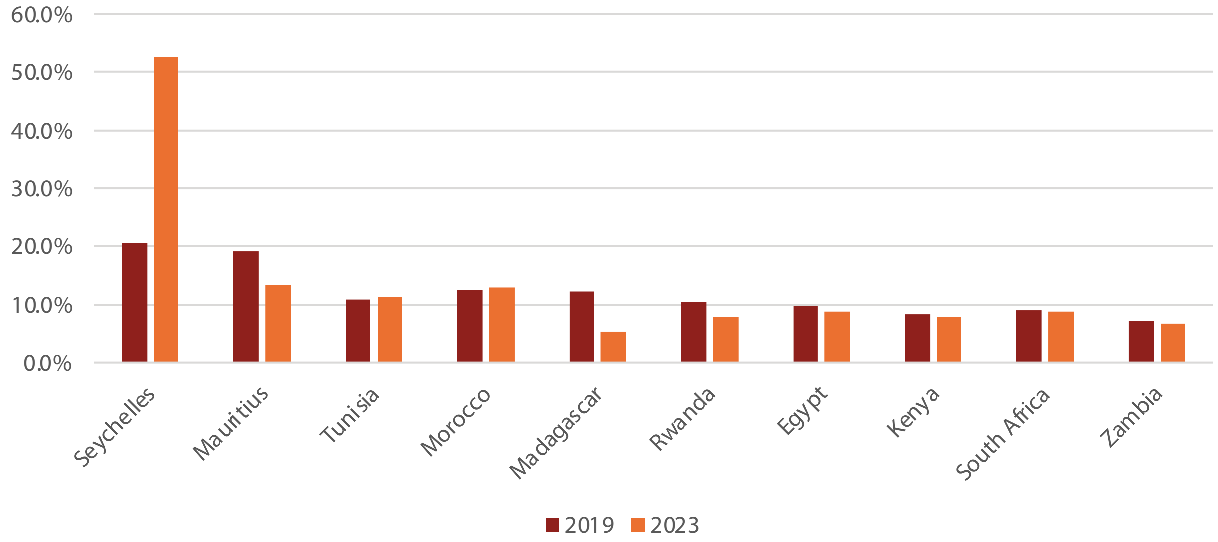
largely driven by the widespread adoption of mobile money accounts. The State of the Industry Report on Mobile Money 2023 by the GSMA (Global System for Mobile communications Association), notes that mobile money transactions in Africa reached US$ 1.26 trillion in 2022, making a significant contribution to Africa's GDP (GSMA, 2023).

Over the past decade, Africa-wide ownership of mobile money accounts has more than doubled, reaching 49 percent of adults in 2021. This growth has been particularly notable in countries where traditional bank account ownership was initially low, such as Mali and Senegal, which saw increases from 8 percent and 6 percent in 2011 to 44 percent and 56 percent by 2017, respectively. In these contexts, mobile money has been instrumental in bridging financial gaps, enabling more people to access and use financial services (World Bank, 2022).

In July 2024, African Member States endorsed mobile money interoperability across Africa to enable traders and customers to transfer between mobile money accounts held by different mobile money providers. A call to action was made to all African Member States to adopt mobile money interoperability by 2027. This will transform African business practices, provide jobs for young people, and boost economic activity, as the continent already accounts for over 70 percent of global mobile money transactions (Africa Union, 2020; IDTFAA, 2024).

Despite these advances, significant equity gaps remain, particularly for underserved groups. Africa's average gender gap in account ownership stands at 12 percentage points—double the average for developing economies globally. Encouragingly, some countries have made notable progress in closing these gaps. For example, Mali reduced its gender gap from 20 percentage points in 2017 to just five in 2021, while South Africa has maintained a negligible gender gap since 2014 (IDTFAA, 2024). Addressing such disparities will be critical to ensuring financial inclusion initiatives are equitable and inclusive, supporting broader sustainable development objectives.

Figure 4.17: Contribution to employment (%) of the travel and tourism sector in selected African countries, 2023



4.1.11 Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries

Table 4.13: SDG Target 8.a and Indicator 8.a.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 8.a: Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries Indicator 8.a.1: Aid for Trade commitments and disbursements	Not aligned

"Aid for Trade" is a World Trade Organization (WTO) initiative that helps developing countries improve their trade capacity and infrastructure so they can benefit from trade (WTO & OECD, 2024). Across the world, Aid for Trade has been used to finance the infrastructure gap, foster digital connectivity and e-commerce, support agriculture and clean energy transitions, support trade facilitation efficiency and enhance inclusivity, all of which are among Africa's priorities. The current geopolitical situation and shifts in foreign policy towards aid might have a significant effect on the Aid for Trade programme, but this is yet to be seen.[11]

Since its launch in 2006 and 2022, US$ 632 billion has been disbursed in Aid for Trade comprising US$ 369 billion by bilateral donors and US$ 263 billion by multilateral donors. Aid for Trade flows amounted to US$ 189 billion for the LDCs, US$ 114 billion for landlocked developing countries and US$ 35 billion for small vulnerable economies (WTO & OECD, 2024).

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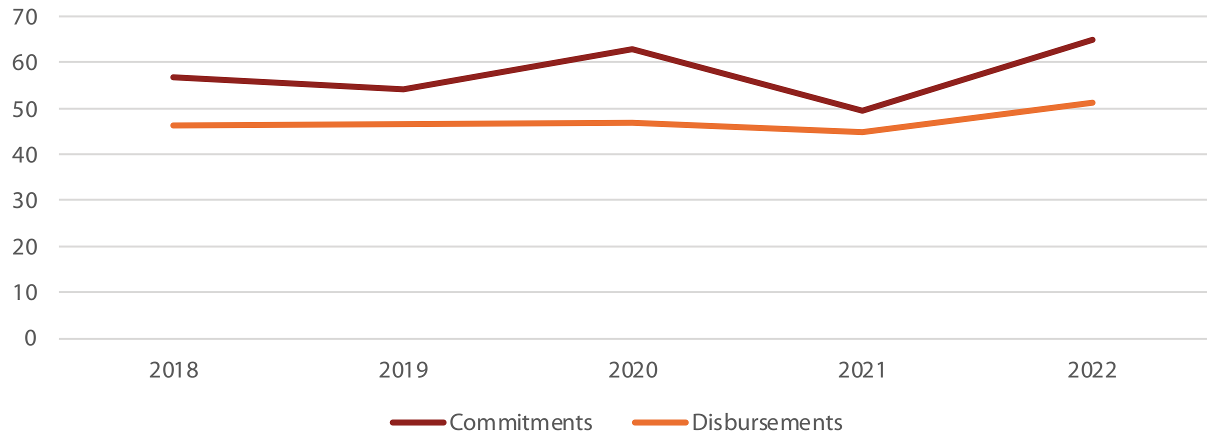
[11] Refer to Chapter 6 on Partnerships for Sustainable Development for more information on aid to the continent.

Between 2020 and 2022, Aid for Trade has largely been driven by an increase in support for economic infrastructure projects and programmes, with support to infrastructure increasing by 28 percent in 2022 to reach US$ 27.9 billion. This was mostly directed at transport and storage followed by energy generation and supply as well as communication.

During the period 2021-2022, the average share of Aid for Trade disbursement to Africa was 37 percent, followed by 35 percent to Asia (Figure 4.18). Disbursements of Aid for Trade allocated to Africa have been reducing since 2019, declining from US$ 17.98 billion in 2021 to US$ 17.54 billion in 2022, when it reached its lowest share since 2006. Africa has been affected by declines in disbursements intended to build productive capacities exemplified by the support to banking and financial services which decreased from US$ 2.9 billion in 2020 to US$ 2 billion in 2022 (see Figure 4.19 and 4.20).

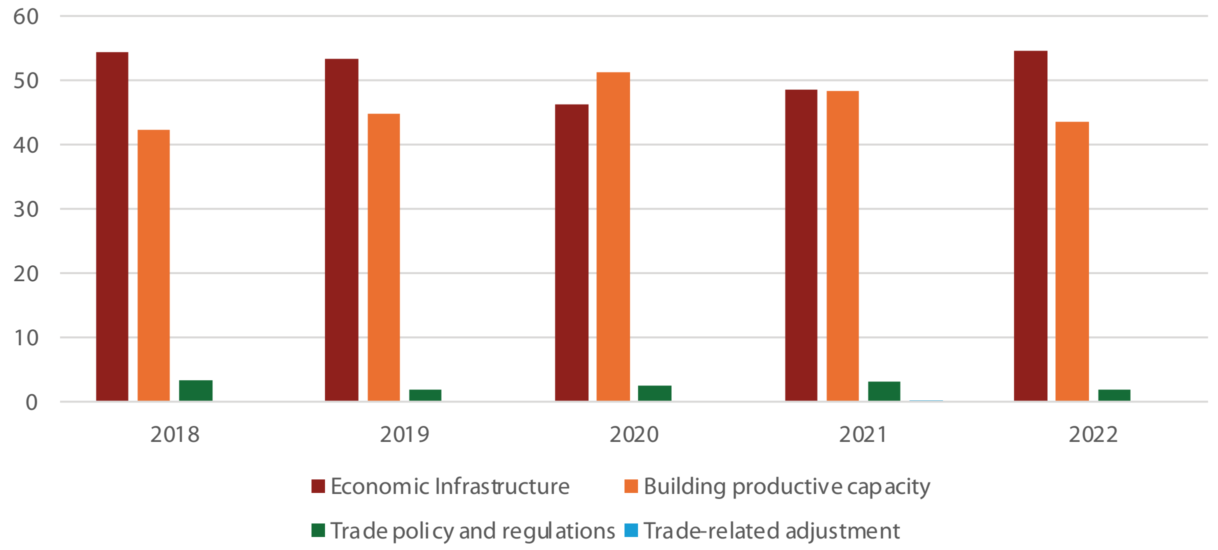
AfCFTA presents opportunities for regional trade and global integration, yet Africa's share in global trade remains below 3 percent. Intra-African trade declined in 2022, with exports falling from 18.22 percent to 17.89 percent and imports from 12.81 percent to 12.09 percent (ECA, 2024b). Strengthening Aid for Trade is critical to removing barriers, supporting diversification, and leveraging AfCFTA opportunities (African Development Bank, 2025). However, challenges such as misaligned project durations and donor funding cycles, institutional capacity constraints, limited financing instruments, and poor stakeholder coordination must be addressed to enhance the impact of Aid for Trade and to support Africa's integration into global networks.

Figure 4.18: Evolution of Aid for Trade (in US$ billion), 2018-2022



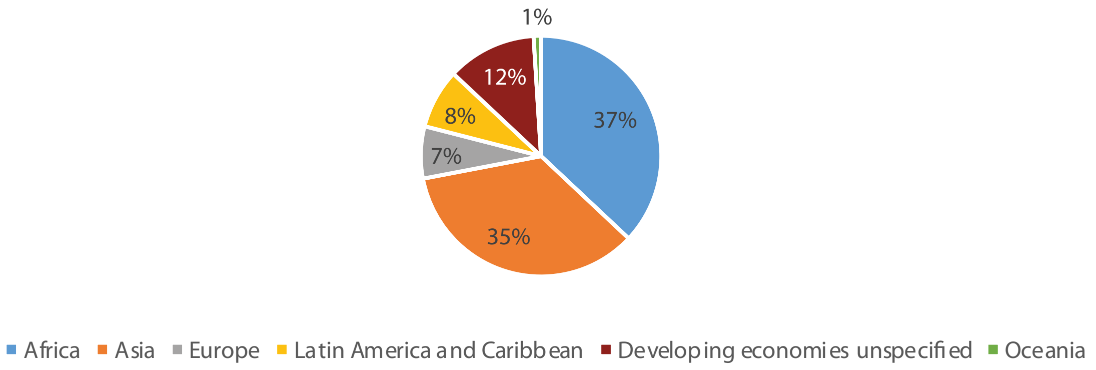
Source: Data compiled from OECD Credit Reporting system (WTO & OECD, 2024)

Figure 4.19: Share of total disbursements by category of Aid for Trade use, 2018-2022



Source: Data compiled from OECD Credit Reporting system

Figure 4.20: Share of Average disbursement of Aid for Trade by region in 2021-2022



Source: Data compiled from OECD Credit Reporting system

4.1.12 Operationalized national strategy

Table 4.14: SDG Target 8.b and Indicators 8.b.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 8.b: By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization Indicator 8.b.1: Existence of a developed and operationalized national strategy for youth employment, as a distinct strategy or as part of a national employment strategy	Not aligned

Youth employment is a top priority across Africa, with the ILO Centenary and Abidjan Declarations (2019) providing frameworks for action. In August 2024, African ministers and social partners endorsed the AU-ILO Youth Employment Strategy for Africa (YES-Africa), a comprehensive initiative to create decent jobs for young people. YES-Africa outlines 12 priority actions across five policy areas, including pro-youth employment frameworks, economic integration, just transitions to green and digital economies, enhanced labour-market policies, and skills development and entrepreneurship.

In 2024, of the 54 African member States, 37 (69 percent) reported having adopted a currently active youth employment strategy. Nearly all include policy areas such as education, training, and skills development (97 percent), and enterprise development (97 percent). Labour-market policies (81 percent), labour demand measures (79 percent), and labour law issues (78 percent) also feature prominently, while macroeconomic and sectoral policies are addressed in 69 percent of the strategies (Chacaltana et al, 2024). Overall, youth employment strategies in African countries are more comprehensive than those in other regions regarding their thematic coverage.

The persistent youth employment challenges in Africa are not explained by hardly the result of a lack of strategies and/or policy initiatives. Rather, the implementation of these policies often lacks resources and require prioritization by governments (Bausch et al., 2024). In turning the ambition of YES-Africa into reality, member States in Africa will need to operationalize youth employment policy frameworks through an integrated approach with a focus on job creation. Important lessons from past interventions include the fact that training programmes alone are often not sufficient for young people to access decent employment and need to be paired with job matching, coaching and access to finance services. Engaging young people meaningfully in not just the design but also the operationalization of strategies is equally critical.

Challenges, emerging issues and opportunities to accelerate implementation

Africa is home to some of the fastest-growing economies and has demonstrated resilience in a challenging global and regional economic environment. Job creation and productivity growth remain critical to ensuring meaningful development for the continent's rapidly growing population. The limited capacity to generate quality jobs in the formal economy and high informality are major challenges, driven by factors such as inadequate industrialization, regulatory barriers, limited access to credit, and low investment levels. Young women face additional barriers, with the rate of those NEET standing at 12.5 percentage points higher than young men. Despite the fact that 69 percent of African countries have adopted youth employment strategies, inadequate resources and prioritization often hinder their implementation.

Public spending in Africa is skewed towards older children (UNICEF, 2024). Many African countries do not have a child benefit system in place, meaning new parents lack the necessary additional income to support their families during this vulnerable time. Likewise, spending on early childhood education is far below the recommended 10 percent of national education budgets in most countries in Africa. Investing in young children, through spending on childcare, child benefits and parental leave, yields high returns as it boosts children's cognitive, physical, and emotional development. Without investment in early childhood, children lack a strong foundation and struggle to fully benefit from education and skills training when they are older. Unlike the G20 which invests across the lifespan of a child, African countries which only prioritize investment in older children face inefficiencies in public investment and a missed opportunity including for economic productivity (Hague & Keis, 2025; UNICEF, 2024a).

Child labour remains widespread, particularly in the informal economy, agricultural sector, and rural areas, due to insufficient quality jobs for adults and limited educational opportunities for children. Financial inclusion, a key driver of sustainable development, also faces challenges across Africa, including low liquidity, high transaction costs, lack of collateral, limited financial literacy, inadequate infrastructure, and the absence of formal identification systems required for accessing services.

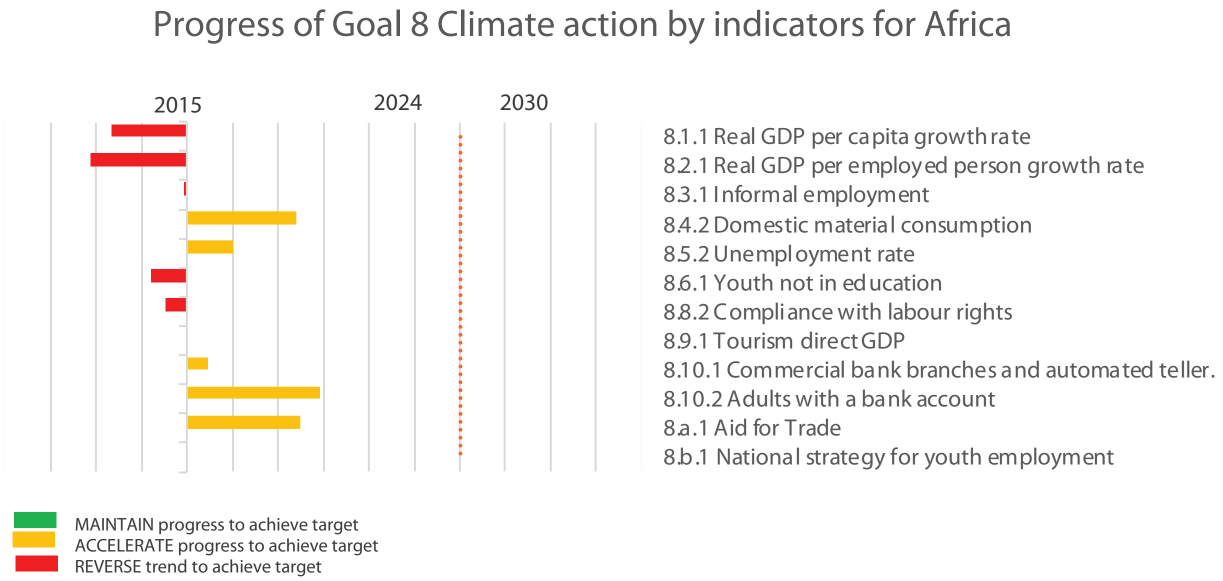
Digital transformation offers great potential to accelerate the implementation of the AfCFTA. In February 2020, the AU decided to include digital trade issues as an integral part of the AfCFTA to build a secured single digital and content market in Africa by 2030 (African Continental Free Trade Area, 2022). This would create economies of scale and enable the African private sector to engage in digital trade and e-commerce, the main enablers of the African single digital market (Africa Union, 2020; IDTFAA, 2024).

Aid for Trade can play a transformative role in tackling these issues by supporting digital transformation, off-grid power solutions, localized service access, and digital identification systems. However, since its launch in 2006, Aid for Trade has faced challenges in measuring its impact (UNECA, 2010), coordinating donor efforts, aligning with country priorities (OECD, 2007), and focusing sufficiently on trade-related infrastructure development.

4.2 Conclusions

The economic growth outlook for the continent is bright and progress has been made on different fronts in achieving SDG 8 and related Agenda 2063 strategic objectives. However, significant limitations and challenges exist, as highlighted in this chapter. To achieve SDG 8 in Africa by 2030, African countries will have to accelerate progress against most of the indicators, as illustrated in Figure 4.21 below.

Figure 4.21



Notes: The figures are colour-coded to indicate expected progress. Green is used for indicators with sufficient progress, where the target is likely to be achieved at the current pace. Yellow is used for indicators with insufficient progress to meet the target by 2030, and red is used for regressing indicators.

Source: ECA computations based on date from the SDG Global Database

Chapter 5:

Sustainable Development Goal 14 – Life below water

Key messages

Fragmented regional cooperation is a barrier, but promising initiatives are emerging. While regional cooperation on marine protection remains fragmented and informal, initiatives such as the Great Blue Wall and Blue Benguela Partnership demonstrate growing regional momentum towards coordinated ocean governance.

Adoption of ecosystem-based marine management (EBMM) is expanding but needs acceleration. Africa's average Ocean Health Index remains below the global average, underscoring the need to scale up EBMM approaches that are already being adopted in several countries to enhance marine ecosystem resilience.

Sustainable fisheries are growing but undermined by overfishing and data gaps. Despite modest growth in the contribution of sustainable fisheries to GDP, overfishing continues to threaten marine ecosystems. Reliable and comprehensive data on fish stock sustainability is lacking, hampering effective policymaking.

Combating illegal fishing requires better reporting and coordination. Countries such as South Africa and Namibia are making strides in tackling illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing through global instruments. However, the absence of continent-wide data limits the ability to measure progress and design comprehensive interventions.

Data and monitoring remain critical challenges for effective ocean governance in Africa. The lack of comprehensive and reliable data—especially on fish stocks and IUU fishing—remains a critical constraint, pointing to the urgent need for investment in monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems.

Table 5.1: Sustainable Development Goal 14 and related Strategic Objectives in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	Strategic Objective 1.4: Accelerate the growth of the blue/ocean economy

SDG 14 consists of ten targets. Targets 14.2, 14.4, and 14.5 pertain to the conservation and management of oceans as ecosystems. Targets 14.1 and 14.3 focus on critical threats to oceans, such as marine pollution and ocean acidification. Targets 14.6 and 14.b address the economic aspects related to oceans, focusing on fishery subsidies and ensuring access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets. Target 14.7 emphasizes the benefits of ocean resources for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and LDCs. Additionally, Target 14.a encourages the advancement of scientific knowledge and technology transfer, while Target 14.c relates to the implementation of international law as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

While SDG 14 primarily focuses on marine ecosystems, safeguarding inland water bodies or fresh water—such as lakes, rivers, and wetlands—and enhancing their ecosystem services, including their support for aquatic biodiversity, is essential for achieving this goal. The African continent hosts some of the largest freshwater systems in the world, characterized by a large distribution and variability of surface waters that play a key role in the water, energy and carbon cycles and are of major importance to the global climate and water resources. For instance, Lake Victoria, the largest freshwater lake in Africa, has a surface area of approximately 68,800 square kilometres (km^2) and a volume of 2,760 km^3. Other significant inland water bodies include Lake Tanganyika with a surface area of 32,600 km^2 and a volume of 18,980 km^3 and Lake Malawi, the third deepest lake in the world, with a surface area of around 29,500 km^2 and a volume of 8,400 km^3.

Additionally, the Congo River Basin is the world's third largest in size around 3.7 million km^2—the second in terms of discharge after the Amazon basin with around 40,600 $m^3\ s^{-1}$ annual average (Fatras *et al.*, 2021). The Congo River Basin contributes roughly up to 3.5 mm/yr of the global sea level variations (Beighley *et al.*, 2011). The Congo River Basin contains also the second largest contiguous tropical rainforest in the world and plays a crucial role as a sink of CO_2, storing around 50 billion tons of carbon (Verhegghen *et al.*, 2012). Oceans play a pivotal role in the livelihoods of many Africans, contributing to fisheries, tourism, and other vital sectors. Of the 54 African countries, at least 38 are coastal nations, with six being island states that prioritize the improved management of marine life. Africa boasts a coastline of approximately 40,000 kilometres, with populations in low-elevation coastal zones projected to rise from 54 million in 2000 to approximately 100 million by 2030. These coastal regions are essential for both regional and global economic growth, facilitating significant international trade at low costs and supporting poverty eradication, job creation, and tourism. However, they are also highly vulnerable to environmental degradation, overfishing, climate change, and pollution. The ten targets under SDG 14 highlight the multifaceted challenges facing the marine environment, influenced by both external and internal factors. Thus, it is crucial to consider these dynamics when developing strategies to achieve the targets outlined in SDG 14.

Sea levels are rising just as the population in Africa's coastal cities is growing rapidly. From 2020 to 2030, the seven largest coastal cities in Africa—Lagos, Luanda, Dar es Salaam, Alexandria, Abidjan, Cape Town, and Casablanca—are expected to increase in population by 40 percent, from 48 million to 69 million people. In comparison, the overall population of Africa is projected to grow by 27 percent, from 1.34 billion to 1.69 billion. Some smaller coastal cities, like Port Harcourt in Nigeria, are expected to grow even faster, with a predicted increase of 53 percent during the same decade. Overall, Africa's coastal areas are expected to see the highest growth rates in population and urban development in the world (Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, 2022 b).

This growing coastal population will place additional stress on already fragile marine ecosystems. The AU and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) highlight that Goal 14 is interconnected with other SDGs, including those focused on poverty reduction, food security, and climate resilience (Nairobi Convention & Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association, 2018).

Healthy oceans further play a vital role in regulating the climate, contributing to biodiversity, and sustaining economic activities. The targets of SDG 14 align closely with other SDGs, particularly those aimed at sustainable economic growth (Goal 8), climate action (Goal 13), and responsible consumption and production (Goal 12). Effective measures to combat pollution and uphold coral reef health under SDG 14 will enhance the resilience of marine ecosystems and the socioeconomic benefits they provide. In Africa, a significant proportion – 36 percent – of municipalities do not effectively manage solid waste, contributing to marine pollution — demonstrating a clear need for integrated approaches to environmental management (UNEP, 2020).

Between 2015 and 2024, African nations have made varied progress towards SDG 14. The performance across various Goal 14 indicators has also been mixed, with some areas showing improvement and others requiring intensified efforts. The progress also shows substantial regional differences.

5.1: Progress and prospects for achieving SDG 14 and related Strategic Objectives in Agenda 2063

Recognizing the critical importance of healthy and productive oceans, SDG 14 encompasses various efforts to reduce marine pollution, mitigate ocean acidification, combat overfishing, and protect marine ecosystems. SDG 14 primarily focuses on the conservation and sustainable use of marine ecosystems. However, in addition to Africa's approximately 30,500 km of coastline, the continent is also endowed with significant freshwater resources, the protection of which is equally essential to achieving SDG 14.

Progress towards SDG 14 presents an opportunity to accelerate both marine and freshwater resource planning. This includes expanding MPA, unlocking the blue economy potential of freshwater and marine ecosystems, and strengthening the resilience to climate change of exclusive economic zones (EEZs).

While overall progress on SDG 14 remains limited, countries in North and Southern Africa have made more notable strides compared to those in West and Central Africa, where major achievements are still lacking. In Southern Africa, land-based waste management initiatives, — such as the *Source-to-Sea Litter Combating Project*, —are increasingly being implemented to address coastal eutrophication and plastic pollution, which remain critical challenges.

In addition to traditional measures for mitigating pollution in marine and inland water bodies, fiscal instruments such as plastic bag levies have emerged in countries such as South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana as effective tools to reduce plastic use. However, for such measures to be sustainable, the revenue collected should be reinvested into the waste management sector to support green entrepreneurship and the growth of small- and medium-sized companies (SMEs).

Efforts to protect marine resources have also intensified through the expansion of MPAs and the adoption of ecosystem-based approaches that improve marine management, particularly in SIDS and freshwater ecosystems in Southern Africa. These approaches integrate science-based decision-making, spatial planning, and community-led conservation efforts.

Although regional cooperation on marine resource protection remains often fragmented and semi-formal in many African state countries, initiatives such as the Blue Benguela Partnership, launched in 2023 by Angola, Namibia and South Africa, demonstrate growing momentum. This partnership aims to protect the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem and underscores the importance of regional collaboration in managing transboundary water resources. The growing partnership across countries is driven by the urgency of issues such as overfishing, marine pollution, climate change and development of the blue economy. Strengthening such cooperation can foster harmonization and the adoption of common technical and legal frameworks, thus accelerating progress towards achieving SDG 14.

Agenda 2063 which identifies Africa's vision for development over the next 50 years, further emphasizes sustainable economic growth and the importance of ocean ecosystems. No fewer than 47 of the 54 African nations have ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), showcasing their commitment to international frameworks essential for ocean governance, as reflected in SDG 14 Target 14.c. Both SDG 14 and Aspiration 1 Goal 6 of Agenda 2063 focus on the sustainable management and use of marine resources to bolster economic growth, food security, and environmental sustainability. Strategic Objective 1.4 of the STYIP specifically calls for investment in the blue / ocean economy.

5.1.1 Prevent and reduce marine pollution

Table 5.2: SDG Target 14.1 and Indicator 14.1.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

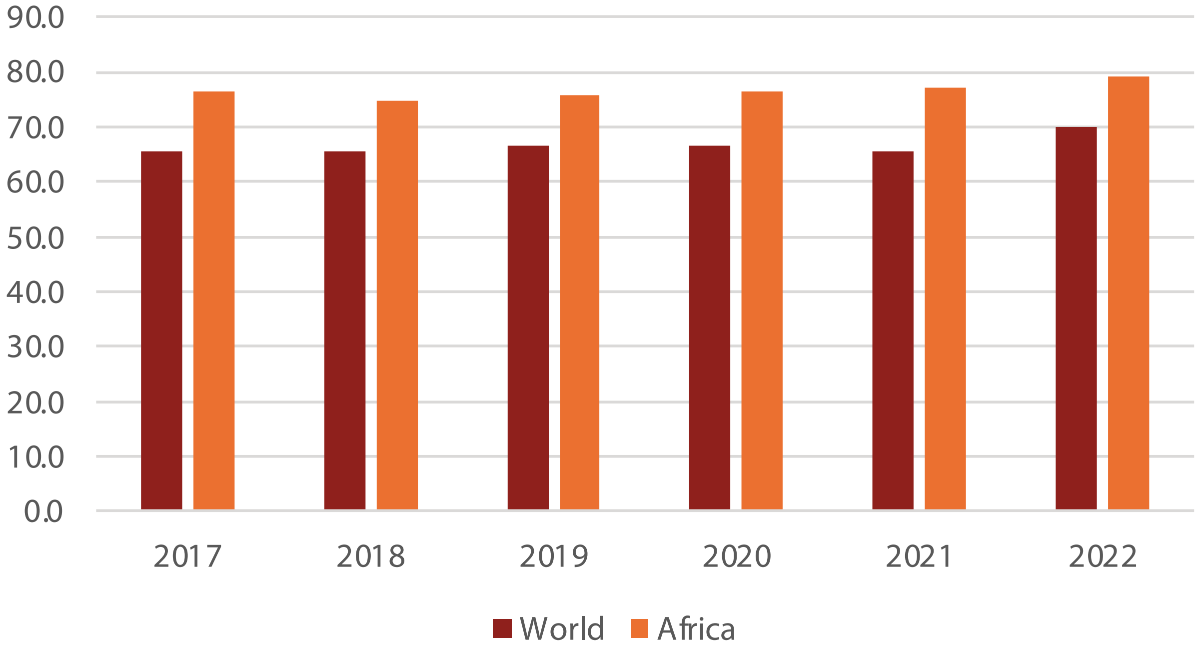
2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 14.1: By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution. Indicator 14.1.1: (a) Index of coastal eutrophication; and (b) plastic debris density.	Not aligned

Coastal eutrophication and plastic pollution remain pressing challenges for coastal nations in Africa

Coastal eutrophication and plastic pollution remain pressing challenges for many African coastal nations. For example, the Gambia has been grappling with significant plastic pollution, leading to the introduction of a comprehensive national action plan to reduce plastic waste by 86 percent over the next decade. Despite such initiatives, data on the overall index of coastal eutrophication and plastic debris density across Africa is limited, highlighting the need for enhanced monitoring and data collection. Between 2017 and 2022, Africa consistently performed worse than the global level of marine waste (see Figure 5.1), highlighting the pressing challenge of sustainable ocean health.

Marine pollution poses threats to ecosystems and human health. In Africa, over two

Figure 5.1 Beach litter originating from national land-based sources that ends in the beach (%)



Source: United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal (accessed on 4 December 2024).

million tonnes of litter entered the beach in 2022, a rise from 1.7 million tonnes in 2017. Worldwide, that figure increased from 10.5 million tonnes to 12.4 million tonnes in the same period. In Central and West Africa, more than 95 percent of beach litter originated from land-based sources in 2021 and 2022, as shown in Figure 5.2, highlighting weaknesses in governance and infrastructure in these two regions compared to the North and Southern Africa region and a struggle to keep pace with the growing impact of human activity. In the Southern Africa region, a combination of land-based waste management initiatives and fiscal incentives aimed at reducing ocean plastic litter at source has gained momentum. This includes the implementation of the Source-to-Sea programme to combat litter and the introduction of plastic bag levies across the region. A positive development has been observed in the reduction of marine eutrophication. The degree of chlorophyll-a deviations on the African coast averaged 3.7 percent between 2020 and 2022, a drop from 4.5 percent between 2015 and 2019, as shown in Figure 5.3. The improvement may have been driven by a temporary reduction in industrial and agricultural activities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (see Box 5.1).[1]

Box 5.1: The plastic bag levy has emerged as both a fiscal and environmental policy instrument aimed at reducing marine pollution

In the Southern Africa region, plastic bag levies have been introduced as fiscal and environmental policy tools to curb plastic pollution, particularly from single-use plastics that often end up in rivers and oceans. **South Africa implemented its plastic bag levy in 2003,** followed by **Botswana in 2006** and **Namibia in 2019,** with revenues earmarked for environmental initiatives and cleanup campaigns. These levies are generally applied at the point of sale and aim to influence consumer behaviour while generating revenue for solid waste management systems. Between 2020 and 2023, **South Africa increased its levy from 25 cents to 32 cents, while Botswana introduced a revised levy in 2021. Namibia has maintained a 50-cent levy** since 2019, despite price variations at the retail level. While these measures reflect progress, challenges remain in terms of enforcement, transparency and the effective reinvestment of revenues into sustainable waste management. Despite differing levels of implementation success, these levies represent a growing trend toward market-based environmental regulation. For long-term impact, experts recommend reinvesting levy revenues into waste infrastructure, recycling programmes and green entrepreneurship, particularly to support coastal and river ecosystems which are vulnerable to plastic pollution.

Source: The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) and the Namibian Association of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Support Organisations (NACSO) (2024).*

* SOCC 2023 Annual Report _ Web _Repro 2.pdf

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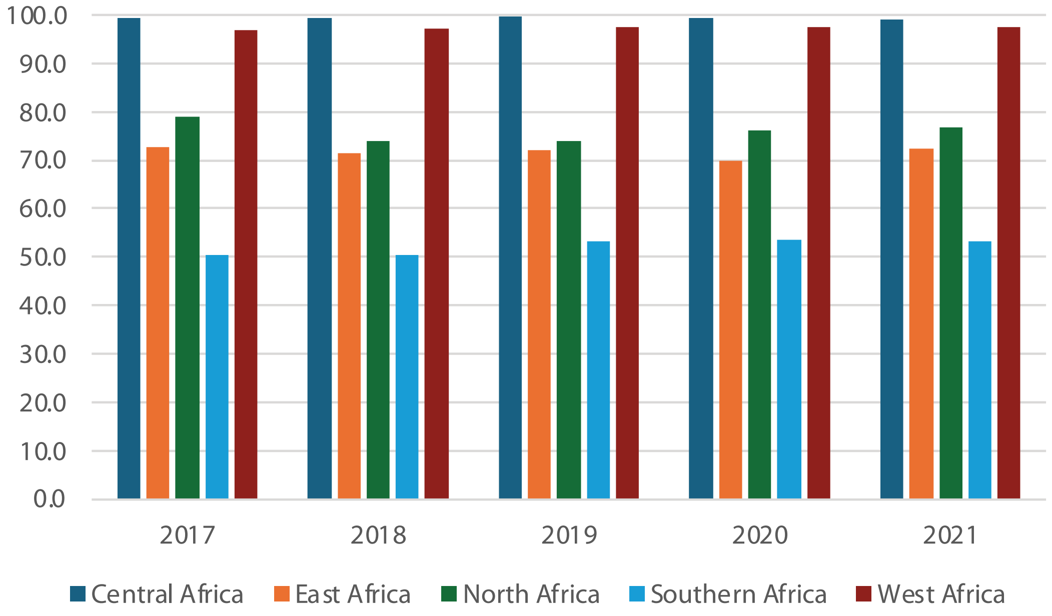
[1] For more information, see Maryam R. Al Shehhi, “Effect of COVID-19 pandemic on oceans” (2020).

Figure 5.2: Marine waste from land-based sources by subregions (percentage)



Source: United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal (accessed on 4 December 2024).

Figure 5.3:

Marine eutrophication: average levels of chlorophyll-a deviations

(remote sensing), 2015–2019 and 2020–2022 (percentage)

Key Trends

Global Average
Stable at
3.5%
(peaked at 3.9% in 2020)

Africa
Higher variability than global avg
4.5% → 3.7%

Hotspots

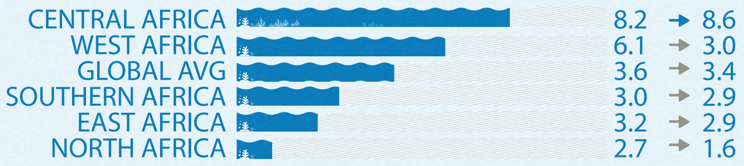
Central Africa
Consistently highest
8.2% **avg**

West Africa
Sharp decline from
2015-19 **2020-22**
6.1% → 3.0%

Stable Zones

Southern Africa
Minimal change
3.0% **avg**

East Africa
Low but steady
3.2% **avg**



Critical Findings

West Africa *shows most significant* ***decline***
-51%

Central Africa
remains persistently ***elevated***

2020 Spike
Global and regional peaks *likely linked to climate events*

5.1.2 Sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems

Table 5.3: SDG Target 14.2 and Indicator 14.2.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 14.2: By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans. Indicator 14.2.1: Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas.	Not aligned

Adopting ecosystem-based approaches in order to manage marine areas is crucial for improving marine health in Africa, where the average Ocean Health Index score is notably lower than the global average.

- The adoption of ecosystem-based approaches to marine area management presents an opportunity for science-based, informed action to harness ocean resources sustainably. These approaches support sustainable fisheries, marine spatial planning, and the establishment of MPAs, helping to balance ecological health with economic development and ultimately improving overall marine ecosystem health. As of 2023, Africa's average Ocean Health Index score stood at 52.8, significantly below the global average of 70. While comprehensive continent-wide statistics on the adoption of EBMM remain limited, the approach gained momentum between 2015 and 2024, driven by regional collaboration, community-led efforts, and supportive climate policies, including National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). In the East and Southern African regions, countries such as Angola, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, and Tanzania are actively engaged in marine ecosystem management initiatives. In 2021, at COP26 in Glasgow, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa, Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, and Seychelles launched the Great Blue Wall initiative. This ambitious, Africa-led flagship initiative aims to transform the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region into a connected network of marine and coastal conserved areas through the adoption of EBMM principles. The initiative seeks to foster biodiversity conservation, enhance climate resilience, and promote sustainable economic development. Specifically, the Great Blue Wall (GBW) aims to achieve the following by 2030:

- Protect 2 million km^2 of marine areas, including EEZs, representing approximately 30 percent of the WIO region.

- Restore 2 million hectares of critical ecosystems, including coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass meadows. By restoring these coastal ecosystems, the initiative strengthens natural defences against climate change impacts such as sea level rise and extreme weather events.

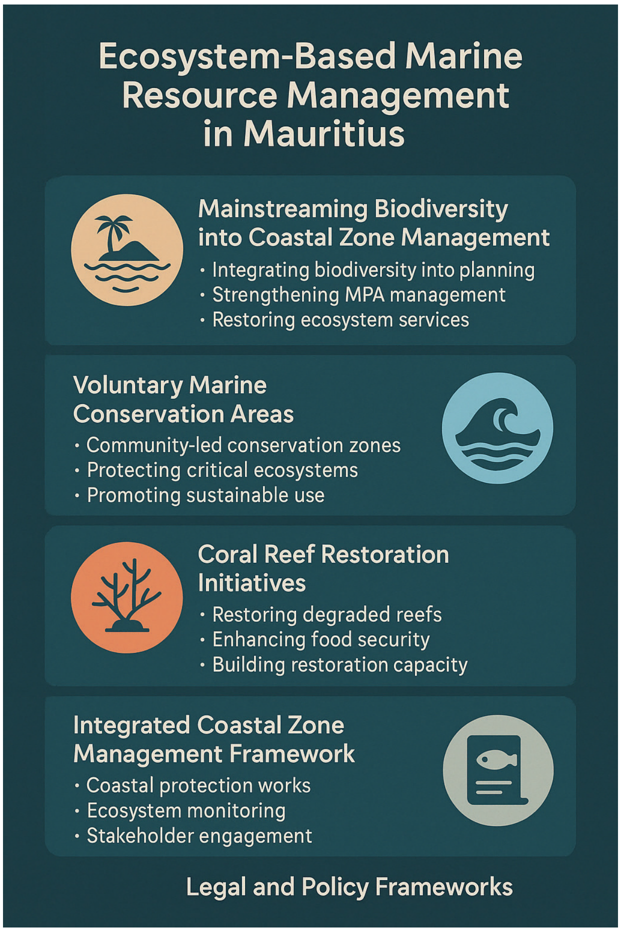
- Sequester 100 million tons of CO_2 through nature-based solutions.
- Create 1 million blue jobs by supporting local communities through funding, capacity-building, and technical assistance.
- Unlock sustainable blue economy opportunities through initiatives such as eco-tourism and sustainable fisheries.
- Explore innovative financing mechanisms, including debt-for-nature swaps, with at least five countries considering a joint mechanism to fund marine conservation efforts.
- Support for EBMM through climate change policy has also grown across Africa. Many countries are integrating ocean-based adaptation and mitigation strategies into their NDCs under the Paris Agreement.

As of March 2025, countries including Kenya, Seychelles, Tanzania, Madagascar, Mozambique, Angola, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Namibia and South Africa had outlined specific actions in their NDCs and NAPs, such as restoring degraded marine habitats, enhancing community participation, and improving marine ecosystem monitoring. However, the lack of financial resources constrains implementation.

As a small inland development state (SIDS), Mauritius has made progress by gradually developing its blue economy framework over the past decade. Mauritius aims to double the contribution of its blue economy to GDP to 20 percent in the medium term, ensuring balanced socioeconomic growth that respects and preserves the marine environment. Central to the blue economy of Mauritius is the adoption of EBMM approaches (see Figure 5.4), which include: **Ecosystem approach to fisheries**: Implementing the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing and promoting sustainable practices among artisanal fishers. **Marine spatial planning (MSP)**: Developing spatial plans to balance ecological protection with economic activities, ensuring sustainable use of marine spaces.

Stakeholder engagement: Establishing co-management strategies that involve scientists, public sector managers, NGOs, and local fishers in decision-making processes.

Figure 5.4: Framework for ecosystem-based marine resource management in Mauritius



Source: Author based on the Mauritius Ministry of the blue economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping (MBEMRFS) (2023)

Box 5.2: Institutionalization of EBMM at Saint Brandon

In 2017, the Mauritian non-governmental organization, the **Saint Brandon Conservation Trust was established. The trust fund** is dedicated to conserving the Cargados Carajos Shoals, also known as Saint Brandon, with a special focus on:

- **Ecosystem restoration:** implementing protocols to eradicate invasive species and restore native habitats.
- **Biodiversity monitoring:** conducting long-term studies on seabird populations and other wildlife to inform conservation strategies.
- **Community engagement:** working with local fishing communities to promote sustainable practices and alternative livelihoods.

The Trust's efforts also highlight the integration of scientific research and community involvement in marine conservation.

Source: Mauritian Wildlife Foundation Saint Brandon Stakeholder Consultation Report (2019)

Furthermore, Mauritius has institutionalized EBMM across several areas of its EEZ to safeguard its rich natural infrastructure, including marine biodiversity (see Box 5.2).

Table 5.4: SDG Target 14.4 and Indicator 14.4.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

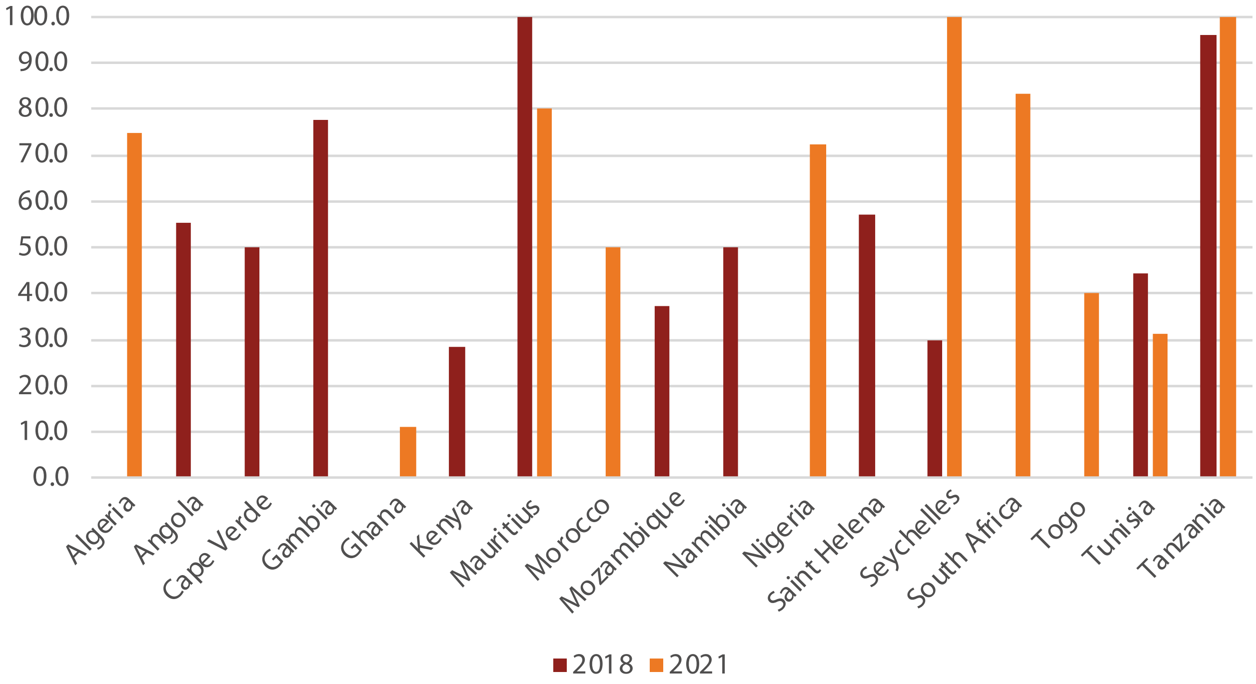
2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 14.4: By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics. Indicator 14.4.1: Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels.	Not aligned

5.1.3 Regulate fishing, end destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans

While Africa has seen a modest increase in the contribution of sustainable fisheries to GDP, overfishing remains a serious issue in various marine ecosystems.

Data from 2021 indicate that Africa saw an improvement in the share of sustainable fisheries in GDP, increasing from 0.27 percent in 2011 to 0.42 percent in 2021. However, significant overfishing still affects species such as those in Kenya and Tunisia, and it continues to be a concern in several African marine ecosystems (see Figure 5.5). While some countries have implemented measures to promote sustainable fishing practices, data on the proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels across the continent is insufficient. This

Figure 5.5: Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels in selected African countries (%)



paucity of data hampers the ability to assess progress accurately and develop targeted interventions.

Table 5.5: SDG Target 14.5 and Indicator 14.5.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 14.5: By 2020, conserve at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information. Indicator 14.5.1: Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas.	Not aligned

5.1.4 Conserve coastal and marine areas in line with national and international laws and scientific guidelines

Key messages: marine resource protection efforts have intensified with the establishment of MPAs.

While significant progress has been made in expanding MPAs in Africa—15.9 percent of marine areas are now designated as MPAs, exceeding the 10 percent target—many of these areas suffer from inadequate management. In 2023, Africa protected 46.7 percent of key biodiversity areas, slightly above the global average. However, the lack of detailed data on coverage and specific examples highlights the need for better reporting and transparency to ensure effective conservation efforts.

The proportion of MPAs varies significantly across African countries. Some nations such as South Africa, have made notable progress in expanding MPAs, contributing to biodiversity conservation and sustainable fisheries. A notable 15.9 percent of Africa's marine areas have been designated as MPAs, surpassing the 10 percent target under Target 14.5, though many such areas lack adequate management.

Commendable progress has been made in protecting African marine key biodiversity areas. In 2023, Africa protected an average of 46.7 percent of such areas, slightly surpassing the global average of 45.5 percent, as shown in Figure 5.6.

Reaching that level was largely due to substantial progress made by a few countries across different regions of Africa, such as Morocco in North Africa, Congo in Central Africa, Sudan and Seychelles in East Africa, and South Africa in Southern Africa.

Furthermore, regional cooperation is being strengthened through initiatives such as the **Blue Benguela Partnership**, launched in 2023 by Angola, Namibia and South Africa. This initiative aims to protect the **Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem**, a vital and productive ocean system.

South Africa significantly expanded its MPAs in May 2019 by declaring 20 new MPAs, increasing marine protection from 0.4 percent to approximately 5.4 percent of its mainland ocean territory— and adding 6.73 million hectares (Adams & Kowalski, 2021). As of May 2025, the country had 42 MPAs covering about 15.5 percent of its EEZ, thereby safeguarding critical marine ecosystems and contributing to biodiversity conservation, sustainable fisheries, eco-tourism and climate resilience (see Figure 5.7).

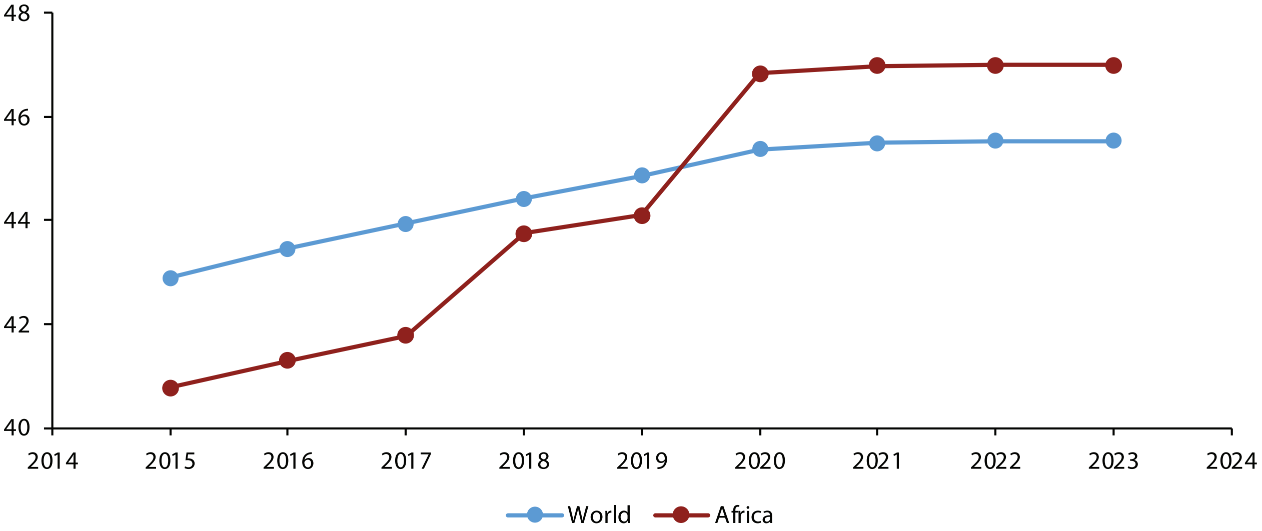
Furthermore, progress in protecting inland water ecosystems in Africa is increasing, supporting broader marine conservation and biodiversity ambitions. As of 30 April 2025, only about 17.54 percent of inland waters were protected globally—, with Africa lagging behind. Nonetheless, several African countries are making notable efforts (United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre) (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2024).

For example, iSimangaliso Wetland Park in South Africa is one illustration of integrated inland and coastal conservation. The country's protection of Strategic Water Source Areas, where only 18 percent of surface waters is formally protected, underscores the urgent need for continued investment in safeguarding freshwater ecosystems (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 2020)

Other country initiatives include the Waza-Logone floodplain restoration project in Cameroon (Moritz *et al.*, 2024) and community-led mangrove protection in Benin. These efforts are increasingly being integrated with MPAs, as seen in Mozambique and South Africa, to safeguard the upstream ecosystems that influence coastal and marine health.

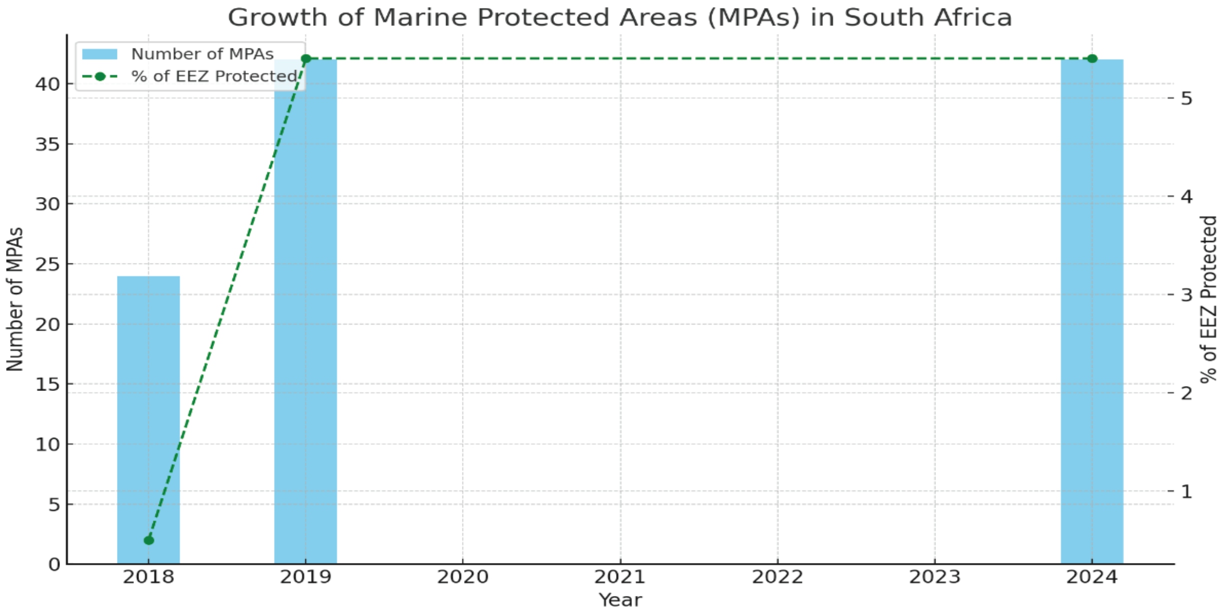
However, challenges persist—such as data gaps, weak policy integration, and limited community engagement. There is a continued need for improved data reporting and transparency, investment and coordinated action in order to strengthen inland water protection and enhance its contribution to marine ecosystem resilience.

Figure 5.6: Protected proportion of marine key biodiversity areas, 2015–2023 (%)



Source: United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal (accessed on 4 December 2024).

Figure 5.7: Growth in MPAs in South Africa



Source: WWF South Africa (2025)

Box 5.3: Agulhas Bank Complex MPA

The Agulhas Bank Complex MPA was proclaimed in 2018 and is located off the southern coast of South Africa. Its objectives are:

- **Habitat protection:** safeguard diverse marine habitats, including pelagic zones, sandy bottoms and rocky reefs.
- **Species conservation:** protect spawning grounds for economically important and endangered species, such as the red steenbras.
- **Sustainable fisheries:** support the recovery of over-exploited fish populations by regulating fishing activities within the MPA.

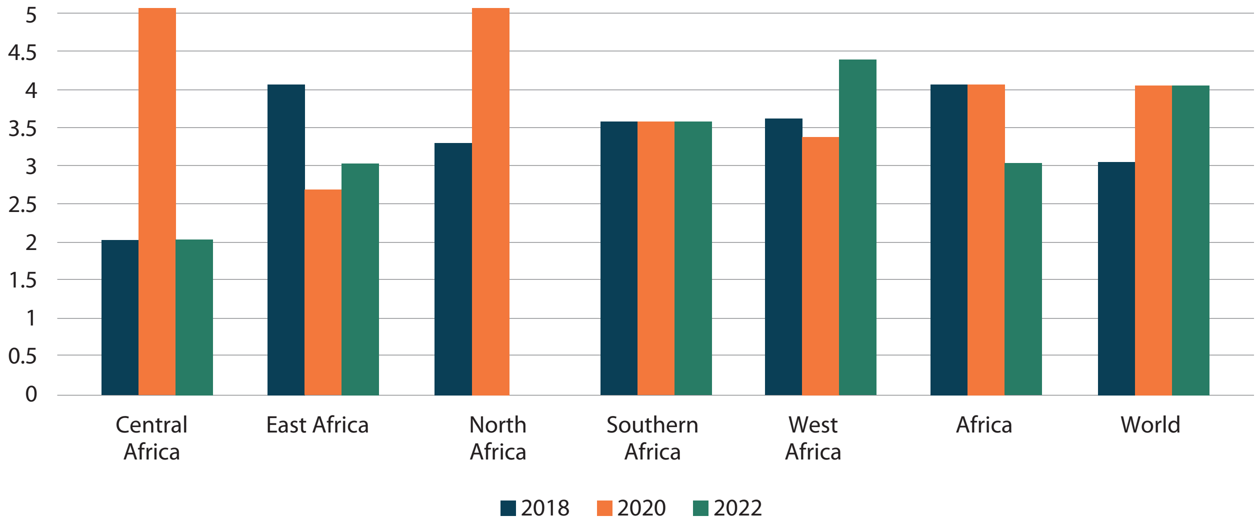
This MPA demonstrates the commitment of South Africa to preserving marine biodiversity through spatial protection measures.

Source: Government of South Africa (2025). Case study provided for the 2025 ASDR input.

Table 5.6: SDG Target 14.6 and Indicator 14.6.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 14.6: By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation. Indicator 14.6.1: Degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.	Not aligned

Figure 5.8: Progress by countries with implementing in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, 2018-2022, by sub region



5.1.5 Ensure implementation of international instruments to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing practices

While some African countries are actively strengthening their efforts to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing through the implementation of international instruments, the lack of comprehensive data highlights the urgent need for improved reporting and assessment to better understand and address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

The continent demonstrated a reduction in terms of degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing between 2018 and 2022. Achievements across the continent in 2022 were also

Box 5.4: AfDB supporting the development of the blue economy in Africa to accelerate the implementation of international instrument to combat illegal fishing and regional fishery governance

The African Development Bank (AfDB) plays a pivotal role in advancing the blue economy, which offers substantial economic opportunities, estimated at US$ 20.8 billion for ten Western Indian Ocean countries and US$ 47 billion for five North African nations. In Small Island States, ocean-based sectors contribute up to 50 percent of GDP, yet many blue economy opportunities remain untapped.

Through its Blue Economy Flagship Initiative, the AfDB supports efforts to improve fisheries governance and combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. These efforts aim to enhance aquatic food production by promoting ecosystem-based management and strengthening value chains.

A key program under this initiative is the Programme for Improving Fisheries Governance and Blue Economy Trade Corridors in the SADC Region (PROFISHBLUE). This programme focuses on strengthening regional integration, enhancing legal and policy frameworks for sustainable fisheries, and developing trade corridors linked to marine resources.

Aligned with the AfDB Feed Africa Strategy, it supports the sustainable use of over 50 fish species across six marine ecosystems, while promoting regional operations to expand cross-border trade. A notable example is a US$ 10 million grant to promote fisheries governance in Southern Africa, demonstrating the Bank's commitment to strengthening trade corridors and conserving marine biodiversity, which are critical for climate resilience and sustainable development.

The AfDB's work is consistent with international frameworks such as the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), helping African countries improve surveillance, enforcement, and compliance. The Bank also prioritizes capacity building and infrastructure development, empowering member countries to better manage marine resources, enhance food security, and support livelihoods dependent on fisheries.

Source: African Development Bank (AfDB) (2022). The Future of Marine Fisheries in the African Blue Economy: Challenges and Opportunities.

Table 5.7: SDG Target 14.7 and Indicator 14.7.1 and related target and indicator of Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 14.7: By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism Indicator 14.7.1: Degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.	Not aligned

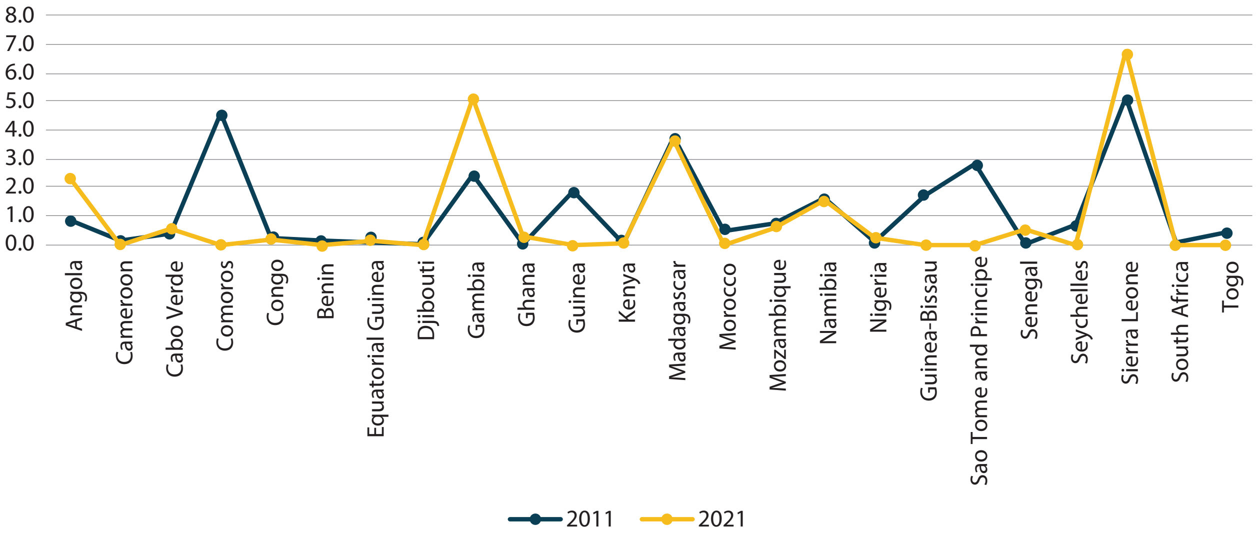
lower than global levels. Notably, data availability was a key challenge in analysing the progress of this indicator. Looking into the subregional performance, East and West Africa demonstrated an improvement in their implementation of international instruments while Central Africa and the Southern African region regressed over this period (see Figure 5.8).

Several African countries have taken steps to implement international instruments to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. For instance, nations like South Africa and Namibia have strengthened their fisheries monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. However, comprehensive data on the degree of implementation across all African countries is lacking, underscoring the necessity for more detailed reporting and assessment (see Box 5.4).

Data availability restricts the measurement of the contribution of sustainable fisheries to GDP, although available data shows a low contribution.

Sustainable fisheries as a percentage of GDP remain a challenge in the continent. This percentage stagnated at a very low level of between 1.2 and 0.9 percent between 2011 and 2021 (Figure 5.9). In 2011, the country with the highest value for sustainable fisheries as a percentage of GDP was Sierra Leone, with only 5.1 percent, while a decade later, the amount had risen to only 6.8 percent. Again, data availability poses a

Figure 5.9: : Sustainable fisheries as a percentage of GDP in selected countries in 2011 and 2021



crucial challenge in effectively analysing the indicators.

Key challenges

Despite progress in some areas, the region faces challenges related to the achievement of SDG 14 and related Strategic Objectives of Agenda 2063:

1. **Overfishing:** despite some advances in sustainable fisheries, overfishing remains a significant issue in various marine ecosystems, impacting biodiversity and food security.

2. **Marine pollution:** coastal eutrophication and plastic pollution are pressing challenges, with rising amounts of litter entering beaches and insufficient data on pollution levels.

3. **Low adoption of fiscal and environmental policy instruments to improve land-based waste management practices.**

4. **Inadequate management of MPAs:** while progress has been made in establishing MPAs, many lack effective management, undermining conservation efforts.

5. **Scale up MPAs, spatial planning of exclusive economic zones (EEE).**

6. **Limited innovative financing strategies:** the absence of creative financial instruments—such as blue bonds and debt-for-nature swaps—, to support ocean-related projects with private sector participation in Africa constrains the development of blended finance approaches and catalytic funding mechanisms needed to unlock the investment potential of marine and inland water ecosystems.

7. **Limited data availability:** the absence of comprehensive and reliable data regarding fish stock sustainability, pollution levels, and the effectiveness of existing regulations hampers assessment and intervention.

8. **Rapid coastal population growth:** growing populations in coastal regions place additional stress on marine ecosystems, exacerbating issues such as pollution and the overexploitation of resources.

9. **Environmental degradation:** coastal regions are vulnerable to environmental degradation due to various factors, including climate change, pollution, and unsustainable development practices.

10. **Economic inequities:** small-scale artisanal fishers often lack access to marine resources and markets due to inadequate legal protection and economic frameworks.

11. **Ineffective implementation of international agreements:** while many countries have ratified international agreements, the degree of implementation remains inconsistent, particularly regarding combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

12. **Integration challenges with other SDGs:** the interconnectedness of SDG 14 with other goals related to poverty reduction, food security and climate resilience poses challenges in ensuring coordinated efforts across sectors.

13. **Low regional and international collaboration:** low collaboration and partnerships among African nations reduce their ability to effectively address cross-border challenges (illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and marine pollution).

14. **Insufficient research and technology transfer:** there is a need for increased investment in research and technology related to marine resources and ecosystems to enhance understanding and management practices.

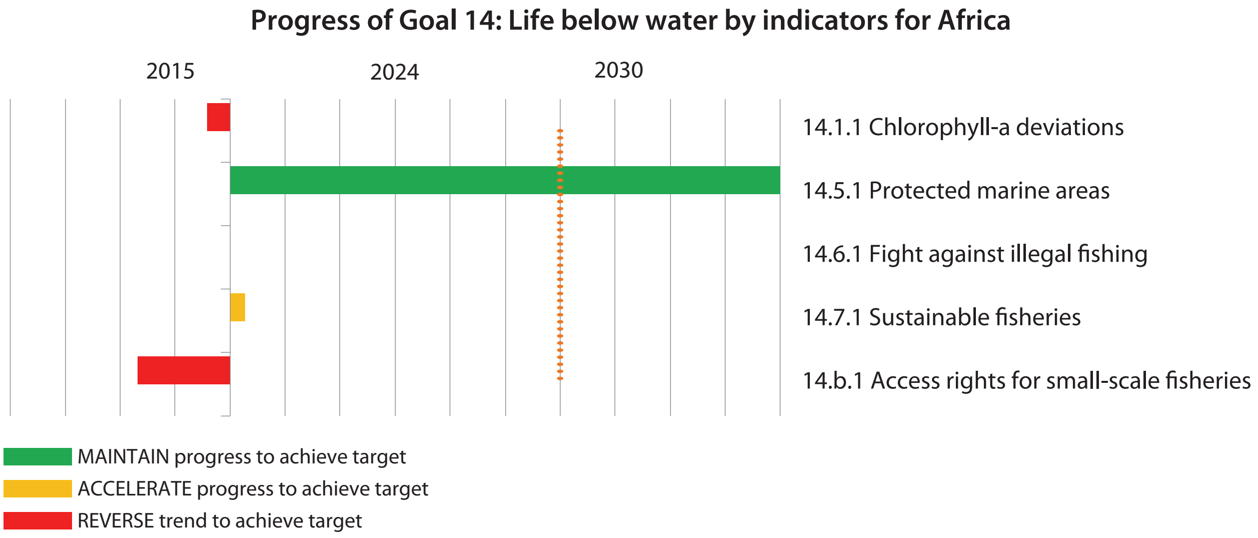
These challenges highlight the complex dynamics affecting marine environments in Africa and the need for integrated, targeted strategies to address them effectively.

Efforts, such as the AU's Integrated Maritime Strategy for 2050 and the AfDB's Blue Economy Flagship, aim to promote a healthy blue economy (Box 3). However, many areas struggle with insufficient data and resources to make informed decisions, impacting overall effectiveness.

5.2 Conclusions

The health of Africa's oceans is critical for sustainable development, yet significant barriers must be addressed to achieve SDG 14 and related aspirations under Agenda 2063. Addressing these challenges is vital for the continent's food security, economic growth, and climate resilience. While significant progress has been made in establishing MPAs and committing to international frameworks, serious challenges persist, including overfishing, pollution, inadequate management of marine environments and rapid population growth in coastal regions. These interconnected issues underscore the urgency of developing and implementing comprehensive strategies that enhance data collection, promote sustainable fishing practices, improve waste management and protect marine ecosystems. By fostering an environment that integrates ecological health and socioeconomic growth, improving governance and ensuring effective community participation, Africa can transform its ocean resources from a source of vulnerability to a driver of inclusive growth and resilience. Greater emphasis on ecosystem-based approaches, investment in research and technology, and effective governance will be essential in addressing the threats to marine and freshwater resources. Moreover, regional collaboration, adherence to international agreements and alignment with international agreements are crucial to accelerate progress towards achieving SDG 14 by 2030 and are pivotal in overcoming challenges and safeguarding the oceans for future generations. The path forward demands not only commitment but also actionable strategies that integrate environmental, economic and social objectives to ensure sustainable development across the continent. Specifically, to achieve SDG 14 in Africa by 2030, African countries will have to accelerate progress against most of the indicators, as illustrated in Figure 5.10 below.

Figure 5.10: Actions that must be taken on SDG 14 indicators for African countries to achieve SDG 14 targets by 2030



Notes: The figures are colour-coded to indicate expected progress. Green is used for indicators with sufficient progress, where the target is likely to be achieved at the current pace. Yellow is used for indicators with insufficient progress to meet the target by 2030, and red is used for regressing indicators.

Source: ECA computations based on date from the SDG Global Database

Chapter 6:

Sustainable Development Goal 17 – Partnerships for sustainable development

Key messages

- Africa faces significant challenges in mobilizing funds for sustainable development, including low DRM, limited access to affordable capital, inefficient public finance allocations and declining ODA.

- ODA to Africa remains well below the United Nations 0.7 percent target. However, the abrupt and drastic drop in USAID funding and the projected decline in donor funding represent serious challenges but also offer an opportunity for Africa to deepen its partnership with new and emerging global partners.

- FDI inflows to Africa dropped by 3.4 percent to US$ 52.6 billion in 2023, representing only six percent of the total FDI to developing economies.

- Africa is advancing digitalization and innovation, despite digital and infrastructure gap.

- Scaling up ODA, enhancing capacity-building in areas such as STI and trade, implementing the AfCFTA and achieving productive transformation are also key to unlocking Africa's growth, competitiveness and sustainable development potential.

- Accelerating progress towards SDG 17 is critical and requires concerted efforts and a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. Africa must diversify its financing sources, foster private sector investment and embrace innovative approaches to development financing.

Table 6.1: Sustainable Development Goal 17 and related Strategic Objectives in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Sustainable Development Goal 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	Strategic Objective 2.2: Strengthen the integration of the African financial ecosystem Strategic Objective 2.3: Build world class infrastructure for Africa's economic development Strategic Objective 7.2: Africa takes full responsibility for financing her development

6.1 Progress towards and prospects for the achievement of Goal 17 and related Agenda 2063 STYIP Strategic Objective

SDG 17 focuses on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. The goal focuses on how crucial international cooperation, commerce, development finance, technology and innovation, statistics and capacity-building are important in accelerating progress towards all the SDGs and the Agenda 2063 more broadly. It is strongly aligned with Agenda 2063 Goal 19 *on Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful coexistence*, reinforcing the need for international cooperation as well as Goal 20 *on Africa taking full responsibility for financing her development*. SGD 17 stresses the need for countries to build inclusive partnerships rather than competing. Global partnership is more crucial than ever given the geopolitical tension and polarization which are hindering cooperation.

The last Human Development Report (HDR) aligns with SDG 17 and reflects on the interlinked development challenges and how countries can capitalize on their national, continental and global interconnections, such as economic, commercial and digital interdependence, to respond to existing shared challenges. The world is increasingly shaped by intersecting global challenges, such as climate change, economic inequality, polarization and geopolitical tensions.

Polarization and geopolitical tensions are eroding the ability to collectively manage global interdependence and tackle issues that transcend borders. No country alone can tackle challenges such as climate change, conflicts and pandemics nor also maximize opportunities such as digitalization, vaccines and trade, issues which spill across borders, without partnership. By reimagining cooperation, shared contemporary challenges can be addressed and progress can be made towards achieving sustainable development. By strengthening partnerships at both the global and national levels, the vision of a sustainable future can be turned into a reality (HDR, 2024).

Expanding DRM, capital markets and innovative financing mechanisms could help bridge the development finance gap. Africa has made some progress towards SDG 17, particularly in terms of regional integration with the AfCFTA, although significant gaps remain.

Africa needs approximately US$ 200 billion to meet the SDGs and US$ 402.2

billion by 2030 to accelerate structural transformation and match the progress of high-performing developing countries in other regions (AfDB, 2024). African countries are facing many crises, particularly around climate change, rising anti-globalization sentiment, fragmentation and geopolitical tensions, all of which are contributing to heightened insecurity, uncertainty and gridlock in cooperation. They also place strain on financial resources and divert attention from long-term development priorities. Half a billion people live in "politically estranged" settings, where relations between donors of official aid and the national authorities are frayed or broken as a result of unconstitutional changes in government, internationally contested elections or major sanctions. This rate is about five times greater than it was in 2010 (Cliffe et al., 2023).

On 20 January 2025, the US Government suspended United States Aid for International Development (USAID) support for 90 days while evaluating the efficiency of its foreign policy and strategic partnerships. In 2024, the foreign assistance from the US constituted around US$ 39 billion,[1] of which USAID resources constitute about US$ 35 billion or 91 percent of the total US foreign assistance.

Africa is the number one destination for US Government aid. In 2024, the continent received more than US$ 13 billion in US aid, of which US$ 11.4 billion was managed by USAID. This aid is aimed particularly at countries in the eastern and central parts of the continent.

However, the vacuum left by the withdrawal of USAID may lead to a new impetus for Africa's global engagement, as it represents opportunities for other global players, including China, India, Russia, emerging economies and the Gulf states, to expand their investment and influence.

The international financial architecture, as it currently stands, is not fit- for the purpose of promoting sustainable development in Africa. High interest rates and debt dynamics limit access to international markets and impact sustainable development funding. Debt levels have risen across Africa over the past decade, with the cost of debt service rising from three percent to over five percent of Gross National Income (GNI) between 2010 and 2020. More recently, the cost of debt has increased while government revenues have decreased, due to the succession of multiple crises including the COVID-19. As of February 2023, eight African countries were in debt distress, out of nine globally and 13 were at a high risk of debt distress, out of 27 globally (IMF, 2023).

Debt relief mechanisms can address part of the debt burden. These include the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) and the G20 / Paris Club Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the DSSI (Ekeruche, MA, 2022; International Monetary Fund, 2021). Between 1998 and 2012, debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and multilateral debt relief initiatives helped 30 African countries increase their social spending. In 2021, African governments allocated an average of 4.8 percent of their GDP to debt servicing, compared to only 2.6 percent for health and 4.8 percent for education. The situation becomes more complex when the diversity of African debt creditors and the mismatch between the continent's evolving debt landscape and the

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[1] https://foreignassistance.gov/agencies

outdated debt management and coordination architecture are taking into account.

At the same time, opportunities abound for leveraging innovative financing mechanisms to mobilize resources for sustainable development. The last two years witnessed a renewed focus on innovative financing mechanisms, including green bonds, blended finance, impact investing, public-private partnerships and enhanced mobilization of domestic revenues. Additionally, the UNDP, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and other organizations continued to advocate for the establishment of the AU Credit Rating Agency, especially considering that ratings provided by global credit rating agencies result in interest rates higher than those emerging from neutral model-based ratings that focus on broader development metrics, creating an opportunity cost of up to US$ 74.5 billion allocated for African nations (UNDP, 2023).

Africa is making significant strides in digitalization and innovation to accelerate development goals, despite the digital divides and inadequate Information and Communcation Technology (ICT) infrastructure. The AU, through its science, *technology and innovation* initiatives, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Program Infrastructure Development for Africa (PIDA) and AfDB are working to promote Africa as a global leader in health care, agriculture, energy, infrastructure, mining, security and telecommunications. Digital-enabled and peer-learning approaches are strengthening capacity-building in Africa, which remains critical to enhancing institutional and human capital. Equipping policymakers with the necessary data and tools can enhance policy formulation, strengthen resilience, foster economic self-sufficiency and improve monitoring of the SDGs.

6.1.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization

Table 6.2: SDG Target 17.1 and Indicator 17.1.1, and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 17.1: Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection Indicator 17.1.1: Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source Indicator 17.1.2: Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes	Target 7.2.2: Share of internal Revenue-to-GDP increased by 30% and illicit financial flows are reduced to at most 1% of GDP Indicator 90: Share of internal Revenue to GDP

Low domestic revenue mobilization (Target 17.1) is one of the most pressing policy challenges facing African countries. Given its importance, the AU has made resource mobilization one of its top priorities. The trend for government revenues in Africa as a percentage of GDP has improved since 2020. However, the continent still trails behind the global average (30 percent) and other regions (Figure 6.2). In 2022, for instance, the weighted average ratio was 30.5 percent for Latin America and the Caribbean, approximately 5.7 percentage points higher than the average in Africa, although it should be noted that the trends in revenue-to-GDP ratios varies across African subregions.

As Figure 6.1 shows, at 32 percent, the ratio in Southern Africa is rising and it performed relatively well among the five subregions in 2022. This comparatively better performance reflects consistent economic dynamic and effective fiscal management, driven by Lesotho (44 percent), South Africa (36 percent), Botswana (29 percent) and Namibia in 2021. Lesotho receives a significant portion of its government revenue from the Southern African Customs Union revenue pool (Central Bank of Lesotho, 2012). South Africa has a more diversified economy and multiple streams of government revenue, including mining, manufacturing and services and has a well-established tax system.

North Africa also shows a relatively high average and steady increase in government revenue as a percentage of GDP, something that was especially noticeable between 2015 and 2020, although there was a small decrease in 2022. This might indicate a growing public sector or improved tax collection efficiency in this region.

Meanwhile, Central Africa has displayed notable variability over time. An upward trend in its revenue-to-GDP ratio was seen between 2020 and 2022, however, the average weighted ratio remains low compared to other regions such as Southern Africa.

East Africa shows a decreasing trend in the weighted average ratio, but with slight fluctuations between 2015 and 2022. West Africa saw an increase in 2022 after a slight decrease in 2020 compared to 2015.

Key factors driving the increase in the overall trend for government revenue (tax and non-tax revenues) in 2022 from the previous year include higher Corporate income tax (CIT) revenues, ongoing efforts to enhance fiscal systems and natural resource revenues with profits from the oil and gas sector attributable to higher commodity prices, as well as rents, royalties and other property income (OECD, AUC, & ATAF, 2024).

Figure 6.1:

Total central government revenue, 2015-2022

(GDP weighted average)

Key Trends

Global Trend

Steady *increase*

30.9% → 33.2%

↑ ***2.3pts*** from 2015

despite pandemic

2020 *Impact*

Most regions grew

during **pandemic**

Regional Highlights

Southern Africa

Highest revenue collection

32%

in 2022

Consistent growth

+5.8 pts ↑

since 2015

West Africa

Stagnant growth

16.5% →18.5%

North Africa

Oil-driven *spike*

in 2020

27%

↑ ***6.1pts***

Central Africa

Sharp 2022 jump to

23.6%

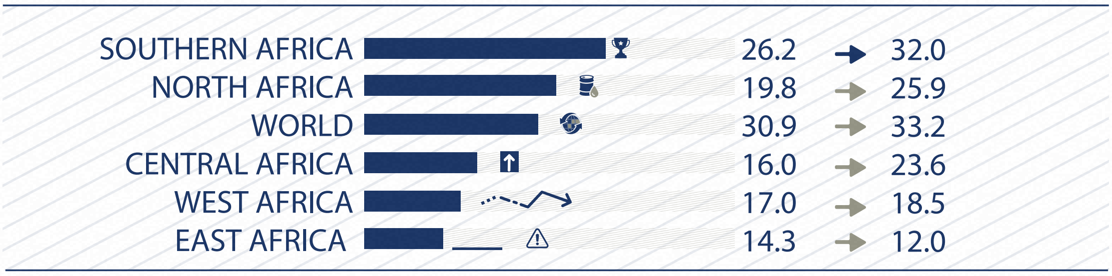
↑ ***7.6 pts***

from 2015

East Africa

Only declining region

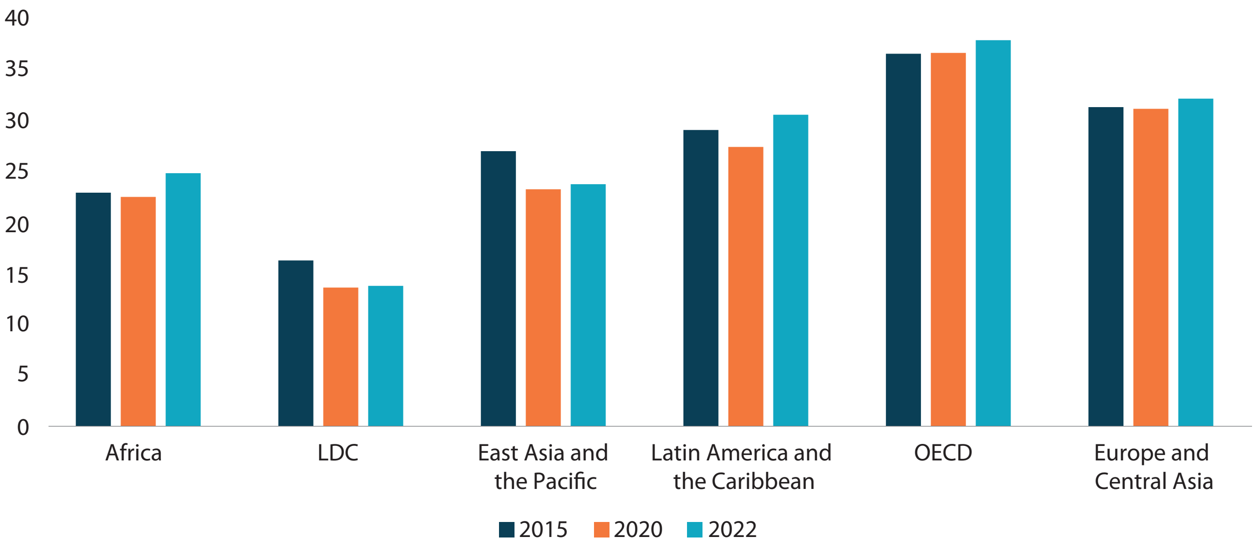
14.3% →12.0%



SOUTHERN AFRICA	26.2	→	32.0
NORTH AFRICA	19.8	→	25.9
WORLD	30.9	→	33.2
CENTRAL AFRICA	16.0	→	23.6
WEST AFRICA	17.0	→	18.5
EAST AFRICA	14.3	→	12.0

(Key: ■= 2015 | __ = 2022 change)

Figure 6.2: Total central government revenue, 2015–2022 (GDP-weighted average) – regional trends (%)

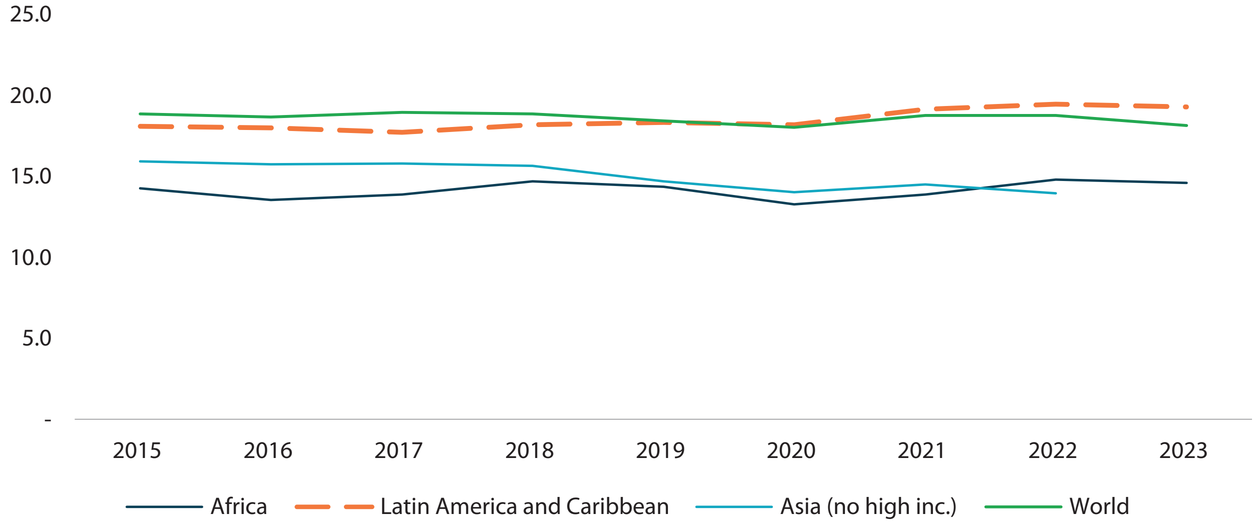


Source: UN DESA, ECA country grouping

Africa performs relatively better in terms of tax revenue compared to revenue-to-GDP ratio, with an average weighted tax-to-GDP ratio only 3.5 percentage points lower than the global average, and 4.6 percentage points lower than the average in Latin America and Caribbean in 2023 (Figure 6.2). However, the average weighted tax-to-GDP ratio of 14.6 percent and the unweighted ratio of 16 percent remains far below the levels in OECD countries which stands at around 34 percent.

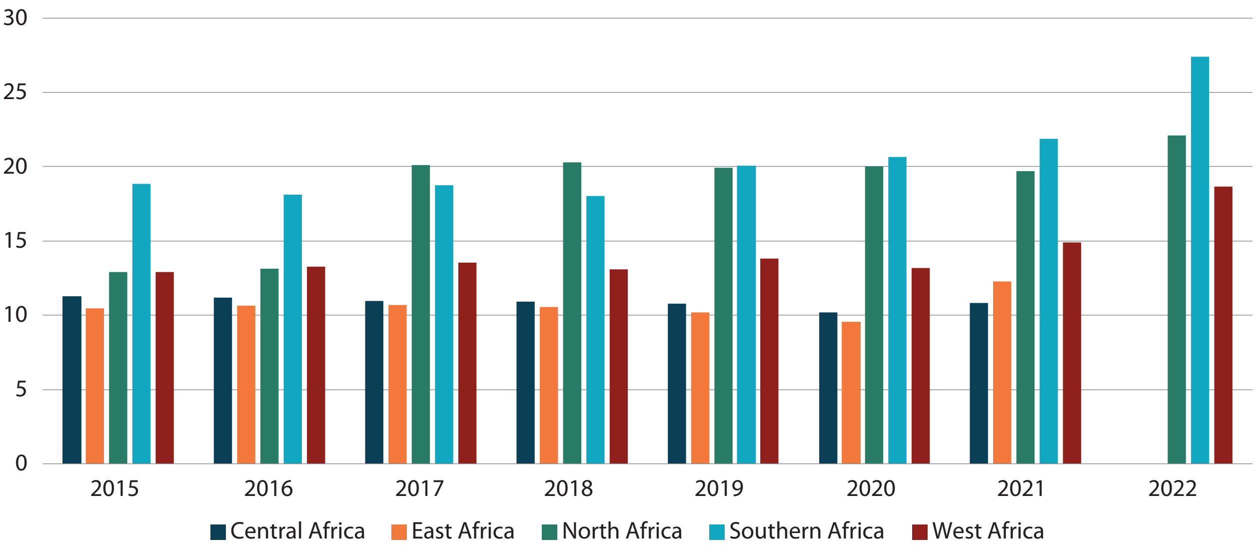
Different subregions show distinct trends in general government taxes as a percent of GDP. Southern Africa and North Africa stand out, while East Africa and Central Africa have the lowest ratios (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6.3: General government taxes as a % of GDP, 2015–2023 (GDP-weighted average)



Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Database April 2024

Figure 6.4: Tax revenue as a proportion of GDP (%), GDP weighed



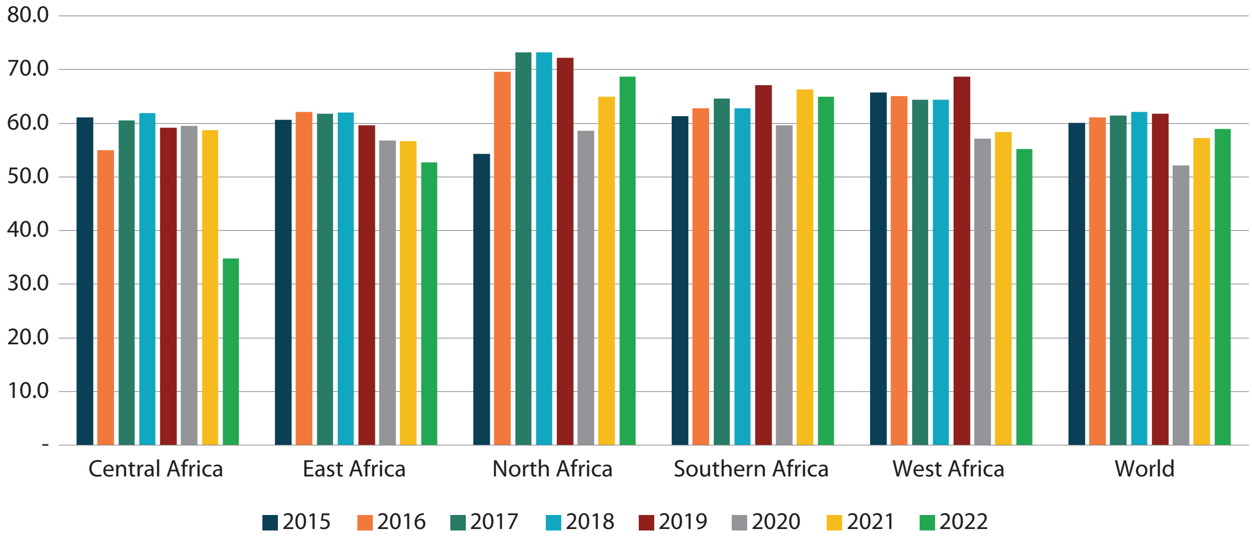
Source: UN DESA

At 57.4 percent, the average proportion of African state budgets that was funded by domestic taxation in 2022 was marginally lower than the global average of 59.0 percent. The African average slightly declined from the 2021 level of 60.7 percent. As shown in Figure 6.5, North and Southern Africa had the highest proportions of all the subregions in 2022 with 68.6 percent and 64.9 percent of their budgets, respectively, financed through domestic taxation.

North Africa saw an increase in the proportion of the domestic budget funded by domestic taxes from 2015 to 2019, reaching 73.2 percent in 2018, followed by a sharp decline in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and then a recovery in 2021. Southern Africa displays a similar pattern, with an increasing trend until the COVID-19 outbreak and then a recovery. In West and East Africa, the trend is decreasing, although there was a slight increase in the aftermath of the pandemic. Central Africa exhibits the greatest volatility, with significant fluctuations in the proportion of the domestic budget funded by domestic taxes, and an average ratio of only 34.8 percent in 2022, reflecting potential instability in revenue collection. In 2022, South Africa, Morocco and Botswana displayed the largest proportions in the share of budget financed by taxes at the country level.

To improve revenue generation, several countries (such as Rwanda, Kenya, Ghana and Senegal) are implementing reforms to their tax administration policy and are making significant efforts to develop and modernize systems through initiatives such as real-time monitoring of transactions, e-tax services, the roll out of electronic billing machines, value-added tax (VAT) enforcement and other automated processes (OECD, World Bank Group and African Tax Administration Forum, 2023). However, for these reforms to be effective, they must adapt to the informal sector, which accounts for a significant share of many African economies. Implementation of the reforms introduced by the revenue authorities frequently faces stiff resistance

Figure 6.5: Proportion of domestic budget funded from domestic taxation, 2015–2022 (Percentage of gross domestic product, GDP-weighted)



Source: UN DESA

from informal businesses in countries such as South Sudan (Kitimo, 2025).

Regional cooperation through initiatives such as Southern African Customs Union (SACU) revenue sharing formula and the Economic Community of West African States tariff and VAT harmonization initiative, also contribute to improving revenue generation. Initiative by organizations such as the African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF) have also provided capacity-building support.

6.1.2 Implementing ODA commitments

Table 6.3: SDG Target 17.2 and Indicator 17.2.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

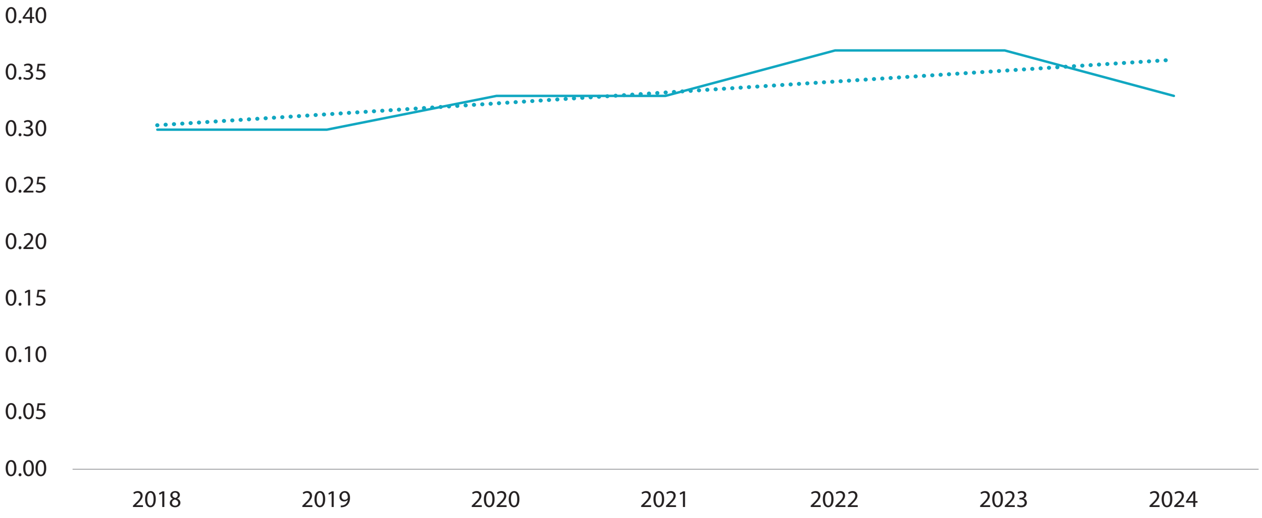
2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 17.2: Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 percent of gross national income for ODA/ GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 percent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 percent of ODA/ GNI to least developed countries Indicator 17.2.1: Net ODA, total and to least developed countries, as a proportion of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors' GN	Not aligned

Many African countries are experiencing poor performance of domestic resource mobilization as well as tightened concessional loans and declining ODA. As shown in Figure 6.6, members of the OECD DAC allocated 0.3 percent of their GNI to ODA (grant equivalent) in 2024, down from 0.37 percent in 2023. These levels remain below the United Nations 0.7 percent aid spending target. Just five DAC members met the target (Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden) (OECD, 2024). In 2023, the Net ODA from DAC members to Africa was US$ 34.5 billion, a 6.8 percent decrease from 2021 (OECD, 2025b).

It is essential to scale up climate finance and ensure full delivery of commitments by historical emitters in the Global North, with funding that is additional to existing ODA. The climate finance gap stands at US$ 2.8 trillion between 2020-2030 in Africa, or US$ 277 billion annually, to implement countries' NDCs. However, Africa received only US$ 30 billion in 2021-2022, 11 percent of what is required. With Africa's own commitment to mobilizing 10 percent of the NDCs, the outstanding climate finance gap is US $2.5 trillion.[2]

In February 2025, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) approved $686.8 million in funding for 11 projects in 42 countries, including Togo, for the first time. These are expected to provide direct support to 115.5 million people and mitigate the equivalent of 45.3 million metric tonnes of CO_2.[3] Africa received 38 percent of the Fund's overall portfolio. Aligning national climate plans and NDCs with the priorities of key funds such as the GCF could help increase Africa's access to global climate funds.

Figure 6.6: Average allocation to official development assistance by members of the Development Assistance Committee, 2018–2024 (Percentage of GNI)



Source: OECD, https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/oda-trends-and-statistics.html; date of access 15 June 2025.

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[2] Climate Policy Initiative (CPI) (2022a). The State of Climate Finance in Africa: Climate Finance Needs of African Countries.

[3] https://www.greenclimate.fund/news/gcf-approves-usd-686-million-climate-action-and-decides-establish-regional-presence?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Many African countries have navigated their way through a fiscal squeeze and are still recovering from global crises (such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict) as well as regional crises (insecurity in the Red Sea and the Sahel, fractures within ECOWAS, mpox, conflicts in East Africa etc.). The abrupt and drastic reduction of USAID funding exacerbated these funding challenges and has had a negative impact on African economies, especially those of the top recipients. The cuts will have an impact on achieving the already off-track SDGs in Africa, with less than five years until the deadline.

All African countries receive development assistance from USAID, with the exception of Eritrea. Through USAID, the United States was the major contributor to development assistance in Africa, and funds were directed to key strategic sectors such as health, education, agriculture, humanitarian work and food assistance. The withdrawal of this funding will, therefore, have an impact on the lives and livelihood of millions of people (US Department of State and US Agency for International Development, 2025). In 2025, international development cooperation faced a major shift. The abrupt withdrawal of US funding—one of the fastest and largest exits by a donor in recent history–could put millions of lives at risk, particularly the most vulnerable. It may hinder or even reverse progress towards Agenda 2030.

Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo were the largest recipients in absolute terms in 2024, whereas South Sudan received the highest amount as a percentage of GDP.

Higher fiscal self-sufficiency and capacity could help African countries strengthen their resilience to aid shocks such as the USAID cuts, by reducing dependence on external support and mitigating adverse effects (see Table 6.4).

In conflict-affected regions, governance systems are weak or dysfunctional, impacting transparency and accountability, international cooperation, financing and investment. Investors and partners see these countries as too risky, often leading to capital flight and a significant drop in FDI.

Table 6.4: USAID support to the top ten recipients countries

Country	Amount received in 2024 (million US$)	% GDP
DR Congo	1,300	1.96%
Ethiopia	1,250	0.73%
Sudan	694	0.64%
South Sudan	830	6.05%
Nigeria	876	0.21%
Kenya	824	0.58%
Mozambique	756	2.80%
Uganda	559	1.05%
Tanzania	520	0.55%
Zambia	486	1.48%

Source: WDI - last Updated date 6/5/2025

6.1.3 Non-domestic resource mobilization

Table 6.5: SDG Target 17.3 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

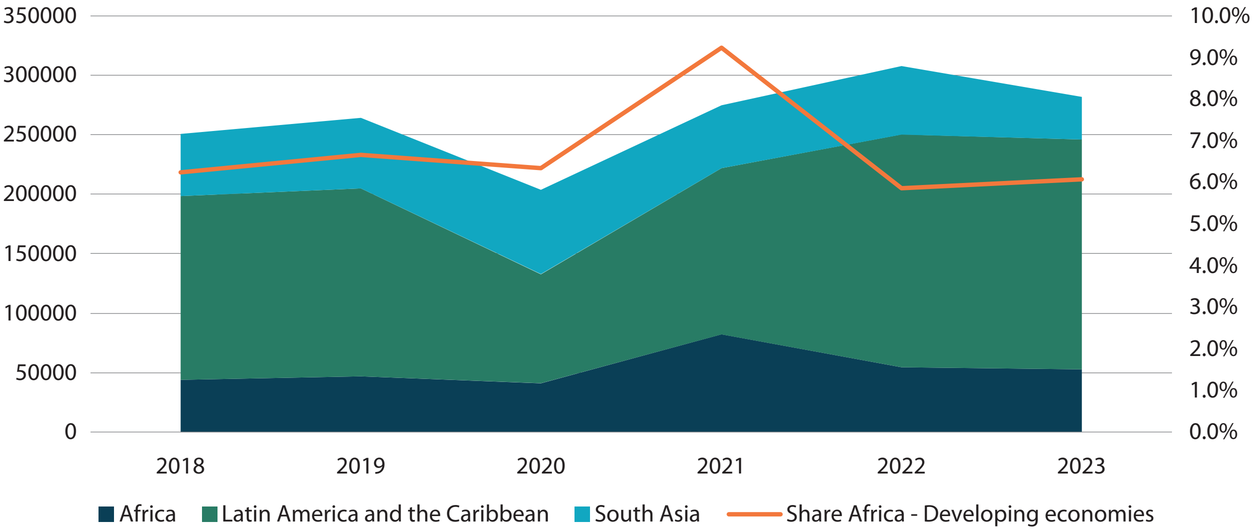
2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 17.3: Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources Indicator 17.3.1: Additional financial resources mobilized for developing countries from multiple sources Indicator 17.3.2: Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP	Not aligned

Inflows of foreign direct investment to Africa dropped by 3.4 percent to US$ 52.6 billion in 2023, representing only six percent of the total FDI to developing economies, down from 9.2 percent (see Figure 6.7). This decline in FDI was seen across most of Africa and was due to investor uncertainty, tighter financing conditions, investor uncertainty, geopolitical tensions and volatility in financial markets. Overall, global FDI in 2023 fell by 1.8 percent to US$ 1.3 trillion.

Africa's share in total investment from developing countries moving from 9.2 percent to 6 percent. Strengthening the link between FDI and local economies is crucial to maximize its benefits. The announcement of "greenfield" initiative, such as the green hydrogen megaproject in Mauritania (UNCTAD, 2024) strive to bolster FDI. To this end, greenfield initiatives enable inclusive partnerships to be built from the design phase onwards, actively involving local communities. By creating jobs, transferring skills, and promoting local resources, they strengthen social cohesion and support SDG 17 by promoting sustainable and equitable cooperation.

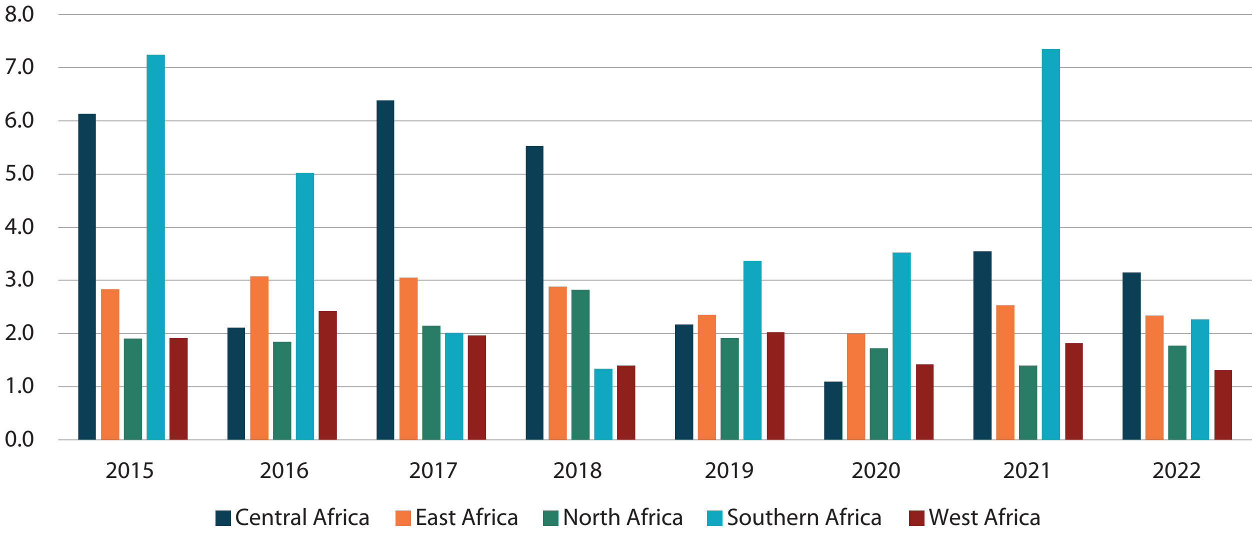
Figure 6.8 reveals several trends in FDI (as a proportion of the GDP). The proportion of FDI in GDP is stable in West Africa,

Figure 6.7: FDI flows, by selected region, 2018–2023, (millions of dollars)



Source: UNCTAD

Figure 6.8: Foreign direct investment, net inflows, as proportion of GDP, sub-regional trends, GDP-weighted average



Source: UN DESA

East Africa and North Africa, highlighting more diversified economies and less dependence on natural resources in these three subregions. This contrasts with the fluctuations for Central and Southern Africa sub-regions, likely driven by their strong reliance on natural resources and the fluctuation of commodity prices.

Remittances in Africa are higher than the global average, with West and North Africa receiving more as a proportion of GDP compared to other sub-regions.

Between 2015 and 2022, remittances played a significant role in Africa's financial inflows and represented a stable source of development finance. Their volume and

Figure 6.9: Volume of remittances in US dollars as a proportion of total GDP, 2015–2022 (percentage, GDP-weighted average)

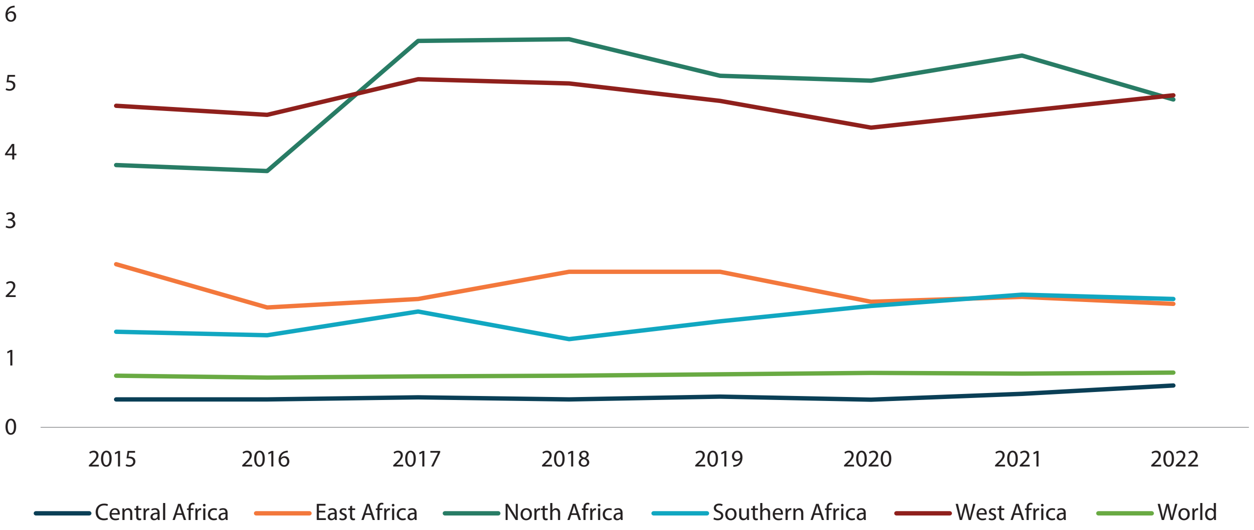
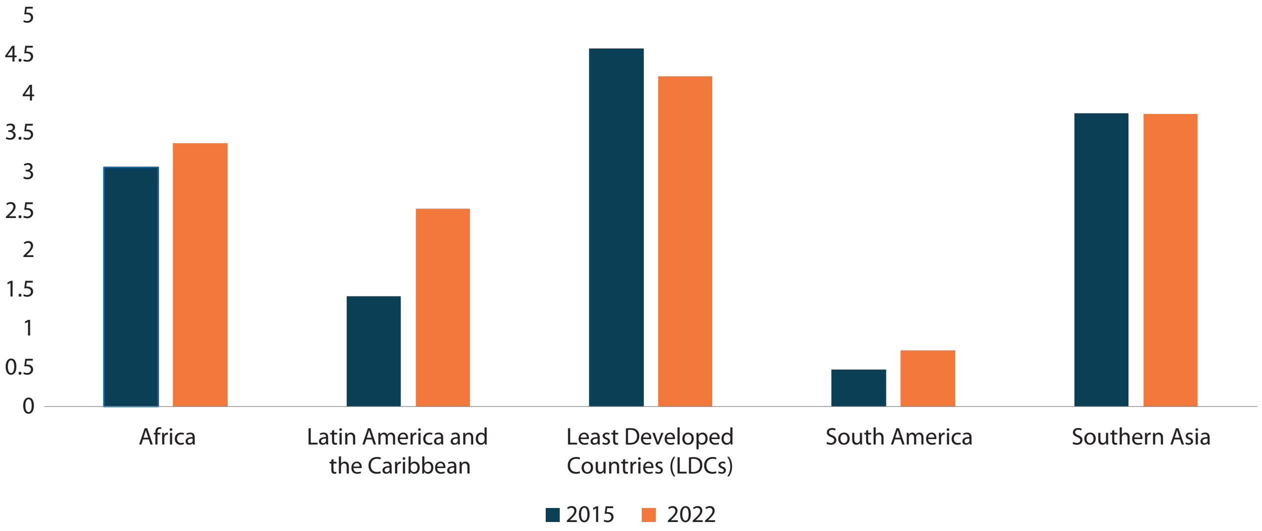


Figure 6.10: Volume of remittances in US dollars as a proportion of total GDP, 2015–2022 (percentage, GDP-weighted average) – regional trends



Source: UN DESA

share of GDP was significantly higher on the continent than at the global level and in regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean. Remittances accounted for 3.3 percent of GDP in Africa in 2022, compared with a global average of 0.8 percent. As illustrated in Figure 6.9, some differences can be seen at the subregional level, with West and North Africa receiving greater volumes of remittances as a proportion of GDP compared with the other sub regions.

Financial inflows to Africa relied much more on remittances than they did in other developing regions and continents. Remittances amounted to 3.3 percent of financial inflows to Africa in 2022, compared to 2.5 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 0.7 percent in South America and 0.5 percent in East Asia and the Pacific. Remittances mostly serve consumption rather than investment. However, at the same time, this emphasizes the crucial role played by the African diaspora in financing development, especially during shocks.

Diaspora-related investments, such as Diaspora-Targeted Bonds (DTBs), have the potential to finance a wide range of SDG-aligned projects and programmes. However, policies designed to attract remittances to specific sectors, such as DTBs aimed at stimulating investment in public infrastructure projects, have experienced limited success in Africa. Achieving success in attracting and maintaining diaspora investment requires continuous and improved engagement, marketing strategies, customer service and delivery of the projects funded through the bonds. Despite a potential gap between enthusiasm and reality, several such bonds have been designed, approved, launched and marketed. Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya and Nigeria have issued DTBs, with the 2017 bond in Nigeria being fully subscribed (AUC, 2019). The structural framework for a continental African Diaspora Finance Corporation (ADFC) was adopted in 2019 by the African Union Ministers of Finance and was endorsed in February 2022 by the AU Executive Council. The aim was to leverage diaspora savings and resources by issuing and managing diaspora bonds and mutual funds (AU, 2022).

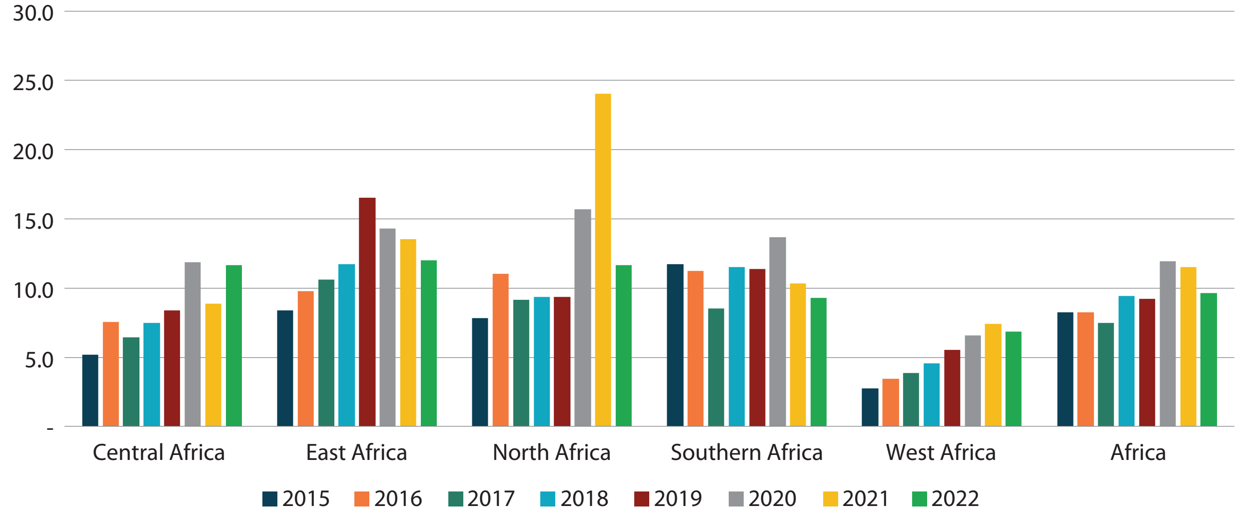
6.1.4 Debt sustainability and investment promotion

Table 6.6: SDG Target 17.4 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 17.4: Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress Indicator 17.4.1: Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services	Target 7.2.3: Reduce the proportion debt service against GDP Indicator 92: Debt service as a proportion of GDP
Target 17.5: Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries Indicator 17.5.1: Number of countries that adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries	Not aligned

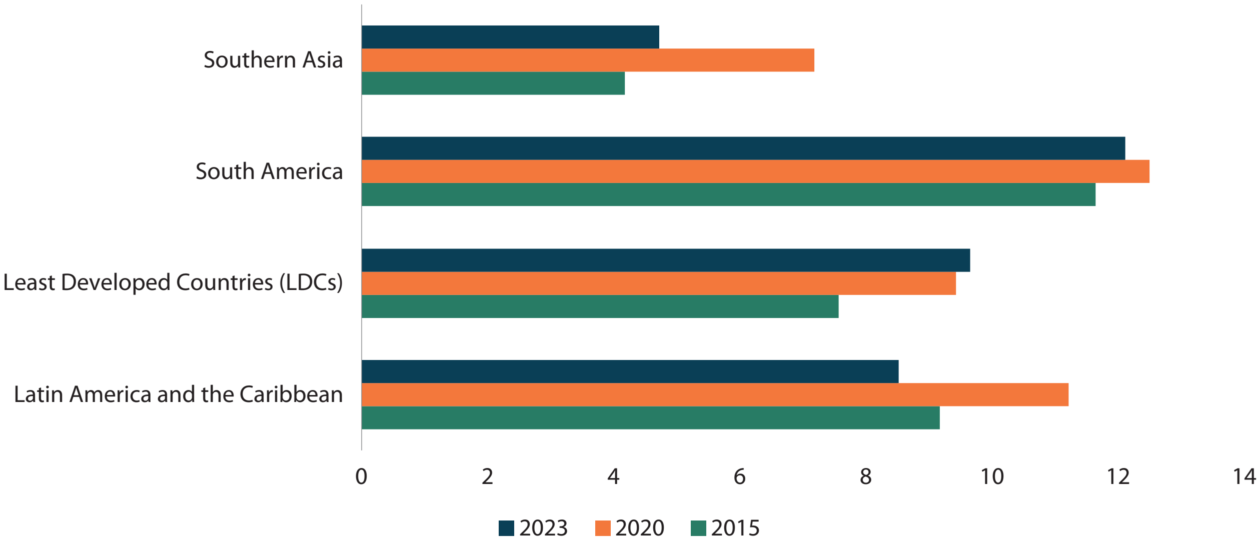
Debt servicing increased from 8 percent in 2015 to 9.6 percent in 2022 in Africa (Figure 6.11). Since 2015, North Africa has had the highest proportion of debt service obligations, followed by East and Central Africa. For North Africa, however, the obligations reduced by half between 2021 and 2022, from a staggering high of 24 percent to 11.6 percent. In 2022, debt service obligations declined from the 2021 levels in all subregions except Central Africa. African debt level as a proportion of exports is higher than the level observed in other regions (Figure 6.12). The issue of sustainability continues to be a growing concern in many countries due to repeated shocks, tight financial conditions in the global capital markets and currency depreciation. As of April 2024, 20 out of 38 low-income countries in Africa were assessed by the IMF to be at high risk of or already in debt distress.

Figure 6.11: Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services, 2015–2022 (percentage)



Source: UN DESA

Figure 6.12: Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services (%) by region, GDP-weighted 2015 -2022



Source: UN DESA, https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database

The number of countries that have introduced investment promotion regimes to directly benefit LDCs is higher in North Africa. This indicator is also an important means of strengthening global partnerships to achieve the SDGs.

At country level, the success that South Africa has had in promoting outward investment demonstrates how investment promotion and government support through financial and strategic international partnerships can help local enterprises expand and compete in other African markets and globally, inspiring other African countries to adopt similar strategies. Rwanda and Mauritius are other successful examples of investment promotion in Africa. Rwanda has taken a proactive role in promoting investment, with a clear mandate and more effective engagement in the decision-making process. Likewise, economic development boards or commissions have been established to attract investment in countries such as Mauritius and Ethiopia. These facilities have supported Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). across many sectors (ICT, tourism, agriculture, manufacturing etc.). Streamlined business processes and a reduction in costs to register new companies have also been key factors behind the success of these countries (World Bank, 2024; McCartney, 2024).

6.1.5 Science, technology and innovation

Table 6.7: SDG Target 17.6, 17.7 and 17.8 and associate indicators, and related targets and indicators in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 17.6: Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to STI and enhance knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism Indicator 17.6.1: Number of science and/or technology cooperation agreements and programmes between countries, by type of cooperation Indicator 17.6.2: Fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, by speed	Target 7.1.5: Africa contributes at least 10% to the global scientific research output, and at least 50% of the research output is translated into innovation and production Indicator 87: Share of Africa's contribution to the global scientific research output
Target 17.7: Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed Indicator 17.7.1: Total amount of approved funding for developing countries to promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies	Not aligned
Target 17.8: Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology Indicator 17.8.1: Proportion of individuals using the Internet	Target 2.3.3: Provide access to Internet connectivity of at least 6 mbps to 80% of the population Indicator 26: % of population with access to internet connectivity of at least 6 mbps

Consistent with global trends and the observed increased accessibility of Internet services and digitalization, Internet usage has been on the rise across all African subregions. The average number of fixed broadband subscriptions in African countries has also slightly improved over the years, although Internet usage remains substantially lower than the global average (see Figure 6.13 and 6.14).

There is a clear disparity in Internet across among the subregions, indicating varying level of ICT infrastructure development. North Africa and Southern Africa have the highest proportion of individuals using the Internet, while East and Central Africa have the lowest proportions. In Central, East and West Africa, the proportion grew substantially from very low levels in 2015. This could reflect successful initiatives

Figure 6.13: Proportion of individuals using the Internet (%), population-weighted average

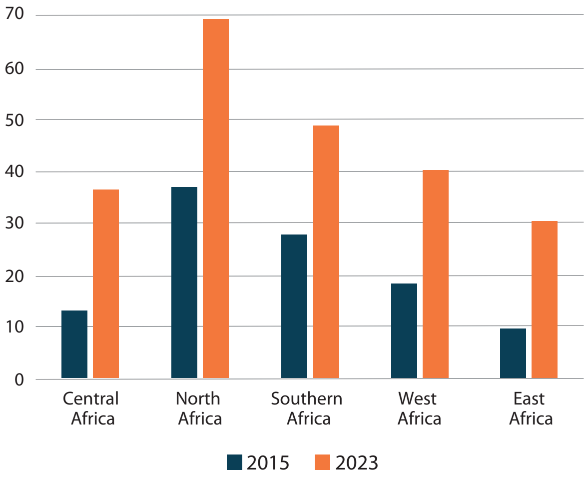
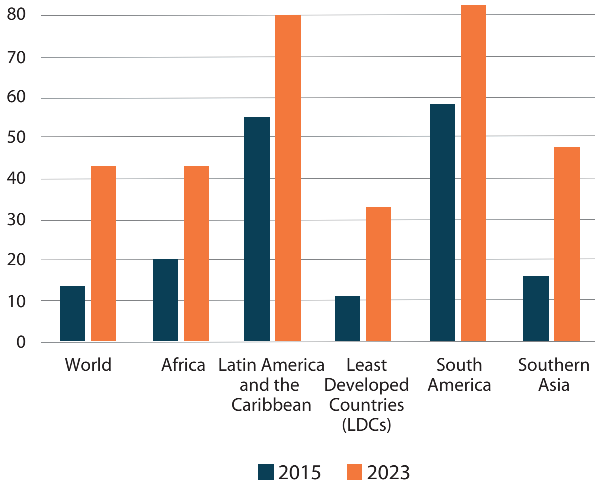


Figure 6.14: Proportion of individuals using the Internet (%), population-weighted average-regional comparisons



Source: UN DESA

to expand Internet access or improve telecommunications infrastructure in these regions. In North Africa, the average *proportion of individuals using the Internet* increased significantly from 36.3 percent in 2015 to 68.9 percent in 2023 (Figure 6.13).

In 2022, North Africa also had the highest subscriptions to fixed broadband services per 100 people in Africa, with an average of eight. For comparison, there were 17.72 fixed broadband subscriptions (per 100 people) in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the global average is 17 percent (Figure 6.15). In OECD countries, this figure is estimated at 35 percent.

Prohibitive costs,[4] lack of digital equipment, poor-quality services, weak purchasing power and low levels of digital awareness are the main factors limiting access to the Internet. Currently, only four countries (Namibia, Tunisia, Egypt and Mauritius) offer pricing that is reasonable to three-quarters of their populations. In 38 out of 48 African countries for which data are available, the current prices of data services would have to be halved to be affordable for 75 percent of the population, and further reductions are needed to achieve universal affordability (AUC & OECD, 2021).

Although Internet access is becoming more affordable, fixed broadband continues to be expensive. In 2024, mobile broadband cost 4.6 percent of GNI per capita in Africa, compared to 1.3 percent at the global level. In contrast, fixed broadband cost 14.8 percent compared to 2.8 percent at the global level.

Connectivity disparities persist, with only a quarter of Africa's urban population having access to 5G, while 73 percent have 4G. In rural areas, 4G access stands at 49 percent and 3G at 26 percent, highlighting significant

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[4] Data services are more expensive in Africa. To address this, the AU's objective is that "by 2030 all our people should be digitally empowered and able to access safely and securely to at least (6 MB/s) all the time wherever they live in the continent at an affordable price of no more than USD 1 cent per MB (i.e. USD 10 for 1GB)", African Union, 2021.

disparities in urban-rural connectivity.[5] Reliable Internet access is important for other SDGs, particularly those relating to quality education, industry, innovation, infrastructure and capacity-building initiatives, through initiatives such as digital platforms and online learning.

Countries could benefit from regional cooperation to expand communication infrastructures, through projects such as transborder submarine fibre points of presence and the regional smart hub facility and data centre, which aim at enhancing ICT connectivity for 285 million people across Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda (African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), 2024).

The MEDUSA cable system project, estimated to cost around US$ 360 million, will provide underwater cable connectivity between Europe and North Africa by 2026 (Africa-Europe Foundation, 2024). Landmark infrastructure projects such as the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor and Cameroon-Chad railway are of strategic importance in enhancing regional connectivity and driving economic growth (African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), 2024). To promote innovation, safety and ethics and to reposition Africa as a global leader in inclusive AI, the AU endorsed the Continental AI Strategy during its 45th Ordinary Session in 2024 (AU, 2024). Many countries face skill gaps in key areas such as software development, data science and AI. The AU Agenda 2063 and the Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) 2024, therefore seek to advance an innovation-driven, knowledge-based economy and have revealed disparities in infrastructure readiness among African nations (AU, 2024). In 2024, Cairo ranked ninety-fifth among the world's top 100 Science and Technology hubs, becoming the only African city on the list (WIPO, 2024). Meanwhile, Mauritius and South Africa have transitioned from "high" to "very high" e-governance digital coverage (UNDESA, 2024 b).

Box 6.1: Strengthening digital skills through the Meltwater Entrepreneurial School of Technology (MEST)

MEST is a pan-African technology entrepreneur training programme, internal seed fund and network of hubs offering incubation for technology start-ups in Africa. This programme equips young Africans with the skills, mindset, network and opportunities required to become tech entrepreneurs, build their own successful technology compagnies and contribute to the transformation of Africa's digital sector.

Launched in Ghana in 2008, the initiative has expanded to Nigeria, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, and South Africa over the past decade. The programme offers 12 months of training followed by 12- to 18 months in incubator, providing a real-world advantage to executives through funding, business incubation and acceleration and access to a global network of investors and entrepreneurs.

Technology skills focus on advanced digital skills related to software development, including Java and other core programming languages, Scrum and Agile development, web analytics and developing algorithms

Source: International Trade Centre (2024)

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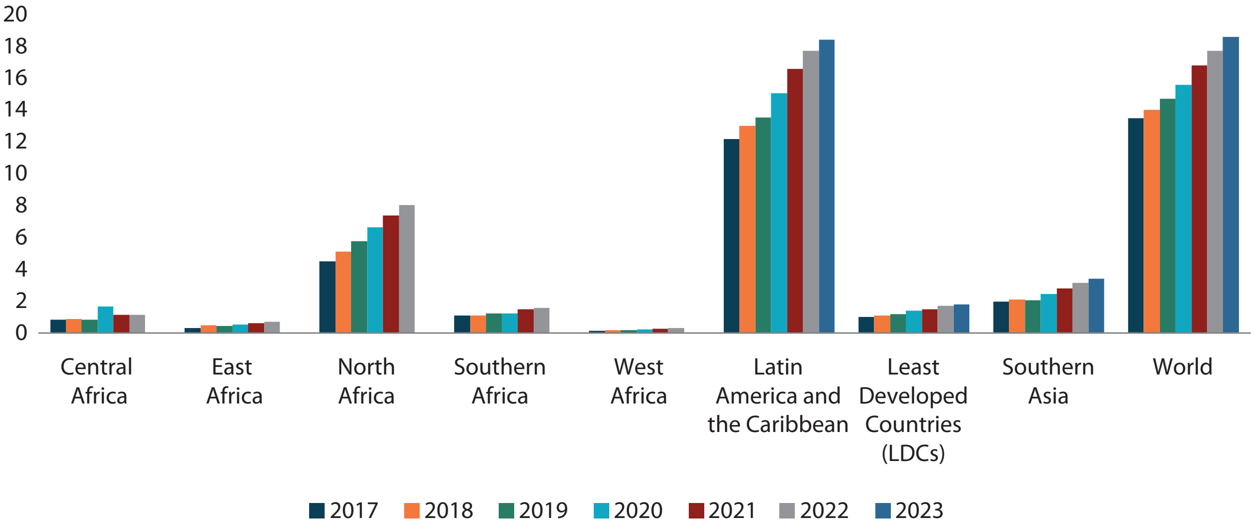
[5] ITU-Measuring digital development : Facts and Figures 2024

Figure 6.15: Fixed broadband subscriptions, 2017–2023 (number per 100 people), population-weighted average



Source: UN DESA

Table 6.8: SDG Target 17.9 and Indicator 17.9.1 and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 17.9: Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the SDGs, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation Indicator 17.9.1: Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation) committed to developing countries	Not aligned

Africa's growing youth population constitutes both an opportunity and a fertile ground for innovation and entrepreneurship. Tech hubs, incubators, regional innovation ecosystems and training programme such as the MEST (see Box 6.1), the African Master's in Machine Intelligence (International Trade Centre, 2024), created in partnership with Facebook and Google, and the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), foster startup growth, skills development and cross-border collaboration. The AfCFTA also offers a platform to scale technological solutions across borders, enhancing trade and integration.

6.1.6 Enhance international support for capacity-building

Given Africa's large capacity gaps, enhancing international support to implement effective and targeted capacity-building remains a priority. Development partners are increasingly adopting innovative approaches to capacity development, such as e-learning, peer learning and experiential training. North-South and South-South cooperation and triangular approaches strive to further facilitate technology transfer.

Increasing emphasis is being placed on equipping African policymakers, public servants including SDGs and Agenda 2063 focal points and private sector actors with the skills required to address development challenges. Institutions such as the ECA, the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the AUC, APRM, UNDP and regional organizations are at the forefront of these efforts. For instance, the APRM-OECD collaboration boosted policy coherence for sustainable development, benefiting Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, and South Africa.

One key focal point for capacity-building is trade in the context of the AfCFTA. In 2024, IDEP partnered with the Government of Italy to deliver e-learning programmes aimed at strengthening capacities in digital trade, targeting policymakers, trade experts, and SMEs from multiple African countries, empowering them to leverage digital platforms for trade. ACBF organized a training on Accelerating AfCFTA implementation and advancing trade and economic integration, targeting the Group of African Ambassadors accredited to the AU (February 2024) (African Union International Centre for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa (AU/CIEFFA), 2024).

Another priority is supporting member States with integrated development planning to foster Africa's transformation through capacity-building, research and knowledge management. IDEP, in collaboration with the APRM, validated the curriculum of the signature training programme on the "Fundamentals of Development Planning". This initiative, involving AUDA-NEPAD, UNDCO and several countries (Malawi, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zambia), aims to improve understanding among development planners' of the frameworks, tools and methodologies for designing and implementing effective national development plans that align with Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

Another focus is also being put on equipping African policymakers, private sector actors, youth and women with the skills required to achieve the SDGs. The Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA), a partnership between the AUC, AUDA-NEDA, the EU and Germany through the KfW Development bank, will provide young people with employment oriented-skills through capacity-building support.

In August 2024, the AU CIEFFA relaunched, its three-month online capacity-building training programme, focusing on gender in education, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math), digital literacy, financial literacy and entrepreneurship (African Union International Centre for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa (AU/CIEFFA), 2024). The AfDB also approved a capacity-building programme of around

US$ 6.7 million for 2023 -2024 to accelerate structural transformation.

Meanwhile, the 2024 edition of the RES4Africa Academy Executive School, a flagship training programme on the renewable energy sector, is dedicated to institutional leaders, managers and key stakeholders in Africa (RES4Africa Foundation, 2024).

Digital transformation has enhanced access to capacity development initiatives. E-learning platforms, virtual workshops, and mobile applications have expanded reach, particularly in remote and underserved regions. For instance, there has been an increase in the number of participants in the IDEP online training courses, which cover topics such as economic management, fiscal policy and gender-responsive planning. In 2024, IDEP trained 4808 beneficiaries from 52 African countries, with 35 percent of the participants being women and young people.

6.1.7 Universal and equitable trading and market access

Table 6.9: SDG Targets 17.10, 17.11 and 17.12 and associated Indicators, and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 17.10: Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda. Indicator 17.10.1: Worldwide weighted tariff-average	Not aligned
Target 17.11: Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020 Indicator 17.11.1: Developing countries' and least developed countries' share of global exports	Target 1.2.3: Increase the share of processed goods to total exports to 20% Indicator 11: Share of processed goods to total exports
	Target 1.2.4: Diversify intra-African exports to at least 0.8 Indicator 12: Level of diversification of intra-Africa exports
	Target 1.2.5: Increase the value of intra-Africa trade by 30% Indicator 13: Share of intra-Africa trade to total African trade
Target 17.12: Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access	Target 2.1.2: Increase in the value of trade in goods and services under AfCFTA Agreement by 85%.
Indicator 17.12.1: Weighted average tariffs faced by developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States	Not aligned

Emerging technologies such as AI and machine learning are powerful tools to improve capacity-building in Africa.

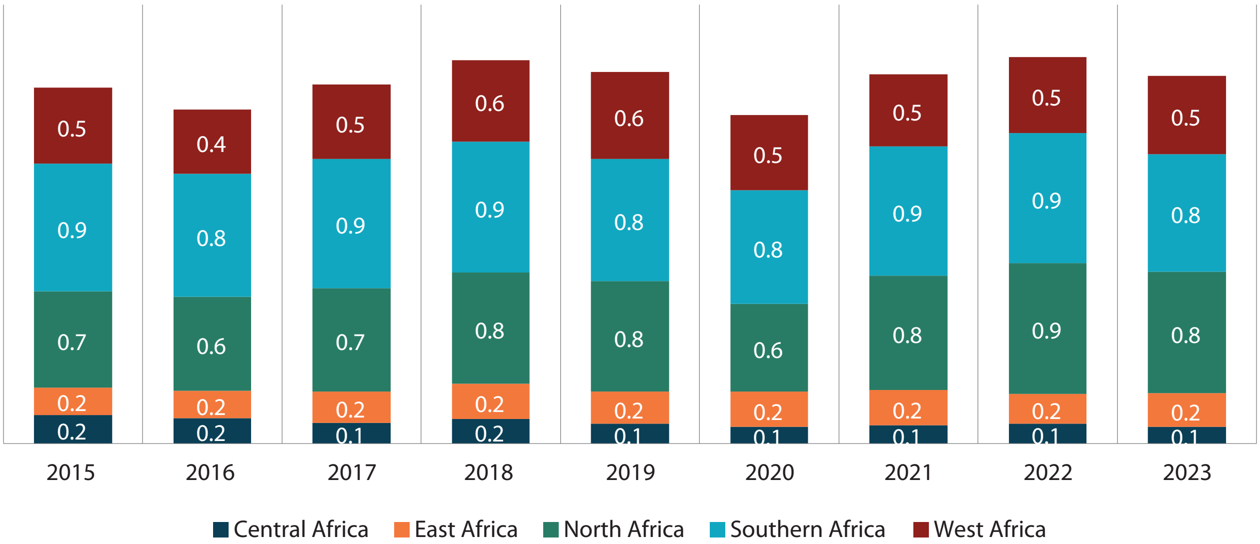
The African share of global merchandise and service exports remains low. However, the implementation of the AfCFTA, particularly through its Guided Trade Initiative (GTI) launched in October 2022 and now including 30 countries, is an opportunity to promote the regional value chain, boost intra-Africa trade by up to 33 percent, yield benefits for diversification and increase Africa's contribution to global trade. As shown in Figure 6.16, the African share of merchandise goods has fluctuated between 2.2 percent and 2.7 percent since 2015, reaching 2.4 percent in 2023. However, this remains below the 3 percent target in Agenda 2063.

North and Southern Africa each held a share of global merchandise of around 0.8 percent, and Central Africa accounted for only 0.1 percent in 2023. The situation was worse for service exports, with Africa accounting for only 1.65 percent of global service exports in 2021. Infrastructure weaknesses such as inadequate transport networks, inefficient border facilities and limited digital connectivity hamper trade efficiency and escalate costs. Challenges to implementing AfCFTA persist, and include limited productive capacities, infrastructure gaps and non-tariff barriers (AUC, 2023).

The transformative potential of AfCFTA is hindered by significant challenges that require urgent attention. Non-tariff barriers (NTBs), including technical barriers to trade (TBTs) and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, remain significant obstacles to intra-African trade. NTBs in Africa are more restrictive than tariffs, with an average restrictiveness of 51.4 percent for final goods and 40.9 percent for intermediate goods (UNCTAD & World Bank, 2018), further compounded by the lack of regulatory harmonization and coordination between countries.

NTBs should be eliminated by regulatory harmonization and streamlined cross-border processes, via strengthened national implementation committees to align

Figure 6.16: Share of global merchandise exports by African subregion, 2015–2023



Source: ECA, DESA

national trade strategies with AfCFTA trade protocols, fostering collaboration between customs authorities, standards agencies and policymakers. Countries should also be provided with capacity support to improve the quality of export products to meet international standards.

Women entrepreneurs face additional and significant barriers, including restricted access to finance, market linkages, regulatory constraints, trade networks, formal structures and cultural complexes. Capacity-building initiatives targeting MSMEs, particularly those led by women and young people, are needed to enhance their technical and administrative capacities, equipping them with the skills needed to navigate cross-border trade and integrating them effectively into key value chains within the AfCFTA framework. It is crucial to strengthen capacities and competitivity at national level and develop entrepreneurs' skills in financial literacy including digitalization and e-commerce, financial management, compliance with standards and awareness of national and regional trade opportunities.

Trade-enabling infrastructures, such as transport networks, border facilities and digital connectivity, should be improved, particularly by leveraging private investments for high-impact infrastructure projects.

Green value chains are a valuable opportunity for advancing sustainable development. By focusing on low-carbon industries in renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture and eco-friendly manufacturing and technologies, African countries can promote sustainable export-led growth while addressing climate challenges.

The absence of sex-disaggregated trade data further limits the understanding of women's contribution to trade and the development of inclusive policies. In response, the AUC, ECA, and Afreximbank have developed a methodology for informal cross-border trade (ICBT) data collection, which has been adopted at the continental level. [6] Implementing this framework on a national basis is crucial for empowering women traders and fostering equitable trade practices.

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[6] Adopted by the AU's Specialized Technical Committee on Trade, Tourism, Industry, and Minerals in May 2024

6.1.8 Statistical systems, monitoring and accountability

Table 6.10: SDG 17 Target 17.18 and 17.19 and associated Indicators and related target and indicator in Agenda 2063

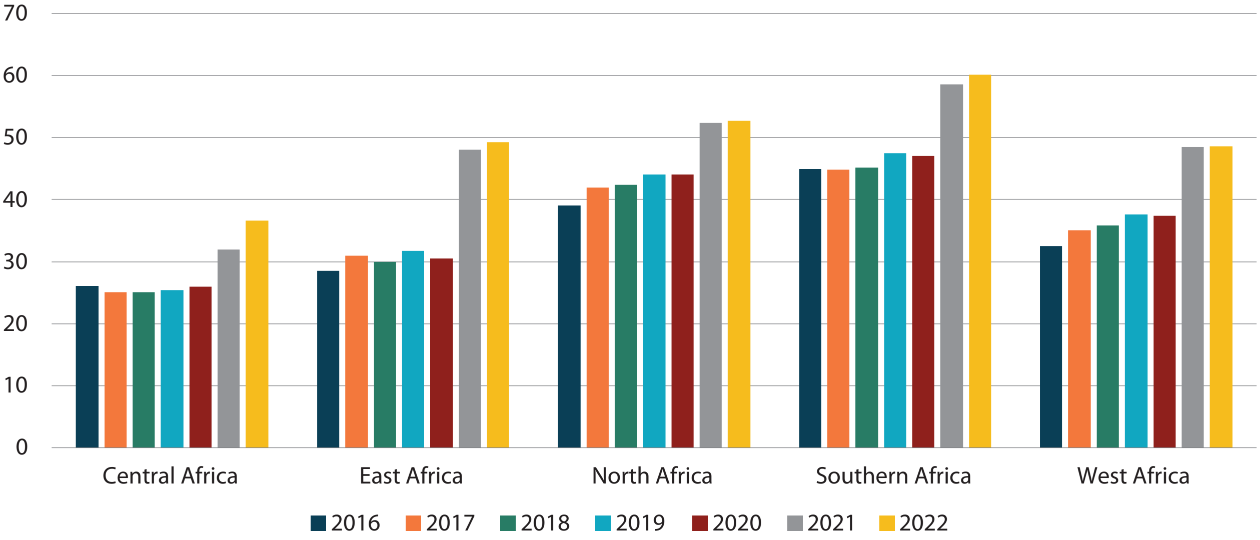
2030 Agenda	Agenda 2063
Target 17.18: By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts Indicator 17.18.1: Statistical capacity indicators Indicator 17.18.2: Number of countries that have national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics Indicator 17.18.3: Number of countries with a national statistical plan that is fully funded and under implementation, by source of funding	Not aligned
Target 17.19: By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries Indicator 17.19.1: Dollar value of all resources made available to strengthen statistical capacity in developing countries Indicator 17.19.2: Proportion of countries that (a) have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years; and (b) have achieved 100 per cent birth registration and 80 per cent death registration	Not aligned

Reliable and timely data are essential for monitoring, reporting and evaluating progress towards achieving the SDGs and implementing national development agendas.

The data infrastructure in Africa has improved in the past decade, but performance continues to be lower than in other regions. In 2022, the index was estimated at 49.8 on average for Africa, which is below Latin America and the Caribbean (66.4) and East Asia and the Pacific (52.1).

Scores for the Data Infrastructure Performance Index, which is used to measure the readiness and effectiveness of a country's statistical systems in collecting, processing and disseminating data, rose across all African subregions between 2016 and 2022, as shown in Figure 6.17. Southern Africa and North Africa show the highest score in the Data Infrastructure Performance Index, while West Africa made the most significant progress over that time, followed by Central Africa. The improvement was likely accompanied by stronger implementation

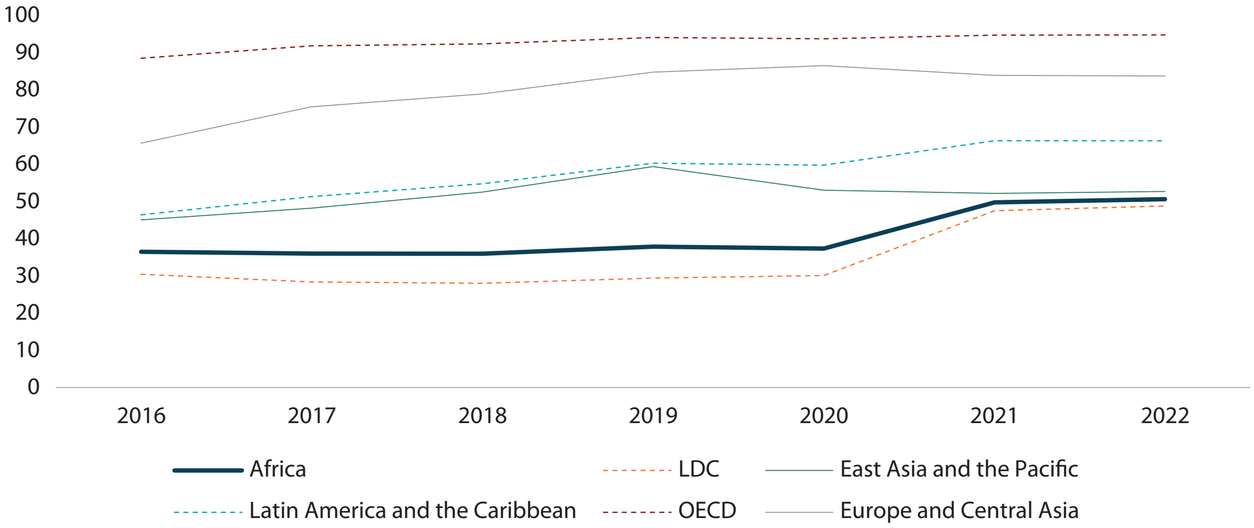
Figure 6.17: Data Infrastructure Performance Index 2016-2022, weighted average



efforts. The top performers– (South Africa, Senegal, Egypt, Kenya and Mauritius) have advanced data-related technological infrastructures and strong institutional frameworks while countries such as Sudan, Guinee Bissau, Congo, Centre African Republic and South Sudan have the lowest scores, which might be attributed to their limited capacity for data generation or high levels of political instability.

North Africa has the highest data openness index, which stands above the global average at 50.7 in 2022, followed by West Africa (see Figure 6.18). Countries such as Morocco and Egypt benefit from strong engagement in open data initiatives. Central Africa and East Africa are lagging behind, but there are notable exceptions, especially Kenya (55.5) and Rwanda (54.7), with the implementation of initiatives such as the Smart Rwanda initiative and the IremboGov initiative (see Box 6.2) (Rich et al., 2017).

Figure 6.18: Data Infrastructure Performance Index 2016-2022, weighted average regional comparison



Source: UN DESA

Box 6.2: IremboGov initiative in Rwanda

Rwanda launched IremboGov (Ahishakiye & Nizeyimana, 2024), an interoperable e-government platform as part of the Smart Rwanda Initiative to digitize government services and promote open data accessibility across government, as well as to improve service delivery. Irembo is a public-private partnership unlike many digital government initiatives in Africa. This platform plays a key role in the government's digitization strategy, providing the technical backbone for government services, making it possible to analyse service demand and various databases to ensure effective policymaking and reduced costs for citizens. Over 100 services are available across 20 government institutions, from family and social affairs to immigration, emigration, identification, health, education, land transfers and national ID applications.

Since its launch, the platform has processed over 25 million applications worth $300 million, eliminating paperwork and saving hours of work. Despite its success, the road to digitization has not been without obstacles. The affordability of devices, low access to broadband and low digital literacy are some of the key factors affecting full digitization of services (Umutoni, 2024). Initiatives, such as the arrival of Starlink in Rwanda, have been taken to address the challenges posed by low Internet penetration.

Data quality continues to be a major challenge in Africa (see Figure 6.19 and 6.20). Methodological inconsistencies and poor-quality data collection undermine the reliability of surveys and censuses. Meanwhile, technological inequalities, inadequate digital infrastructure, and insufficiently skilled personnel slow the adoption of innovations such as Big Data and geospatial technologies.

Limited financial resources hinder the modernization of statistical systems, delaying key activities such as censuses, surveys, and civil registration. The lack of disaggregated and/or sex, age and geographic data to monitor the SDGs and Agenda 2063 limits the understanding and adequate use of the data to formulate policies. There are also concerns over data privacy, governance and security, which require robust regulatory frameworks.

The number of African countries that have national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (Indicator 17.18.2)

Figure 6.19: Open Data Inventory (ODIN) Coverage Index 2022, by subregion

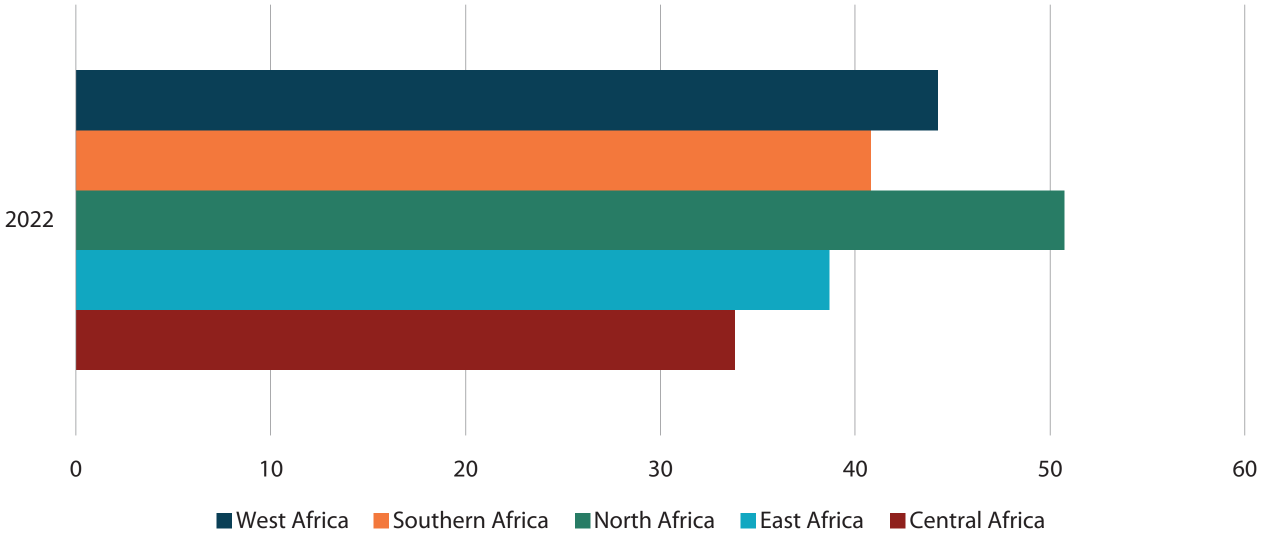
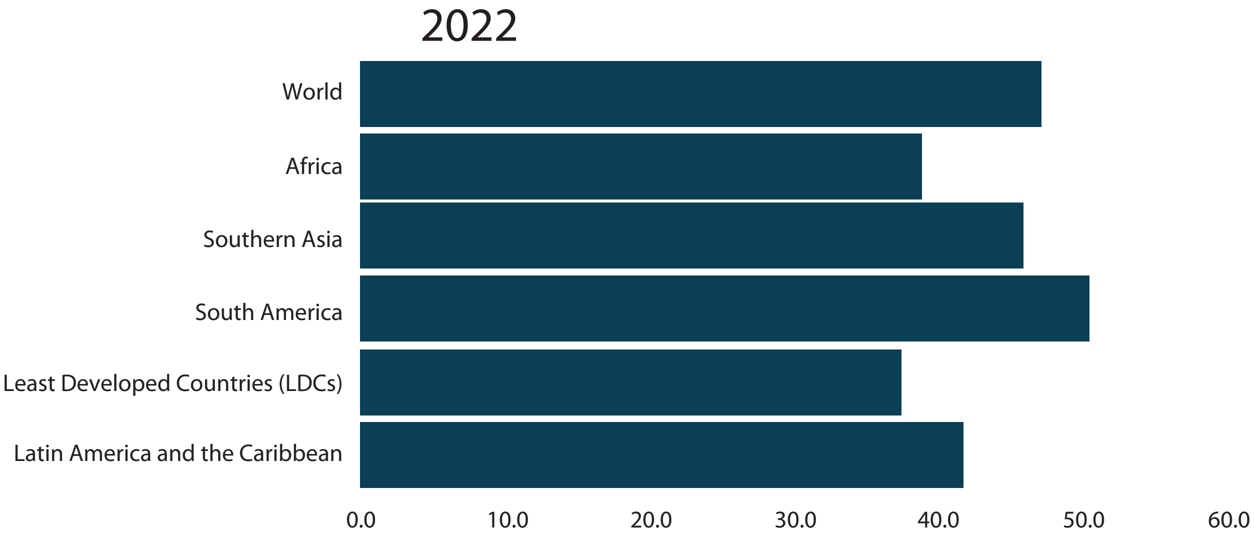


Figure 6.20: Open Data Inventory (ODIN) Coverage Index 2022, weighted average, regional comparison



Source: DESA

increased from 39 in 2022 to 41 in 2023 (UN, 2024) (UN, 2024). Regarding the conduct of population and housing census (Indicator 17.19.2) for the period 2015-2025, 50 African States were expected to conduct at least one population and housing census. However, only 39 of them had conducted their censuses by the end of the round, a decrease of eight countries (17 percent) from the previous round. Persistent gaps in data availability highlight the need for sustained investments to ensure timeliness and coverage. A lack of funding is a major challenge, undermining the resilience of statistical systems and the capacity to effectively monitor the SDGs (AU, AfDB, UNDP, & ECA, 2024). Continued efforts and sustained advocacy are needed to achieve the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) objective for 2017-2026, which aim to increase public expenditure to enhance statistical systems to 0.15 percent of the national budgets (AUC, 2017).

The dependence of governments on external donors for censuses and surveys exacerbates the problem. That said, the adoption of electronic tablets for censuses, as well as the use of geospatial technologies have improved the speed and accuracy of data collection.

Institutions such as the ECA, AfDB, UNDP, AUC and Partnership in statistics for development in the 21st century (PARIS21) continue to advance innovation in statistical systems through regional collaboration, capacity-building, digital censuses and platforms, administrative data modernization, and the use of Big Data and Data Science as demonstrated by initiatives such as Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS), the ECA's Takwimu programme and StatCom Africa.

The 9th Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom Africa), held in 2024, focused on mobilizing the technical and financial resources needed to support innovation for modernizing African national statistical systems, and enable evidence-based policymaking.

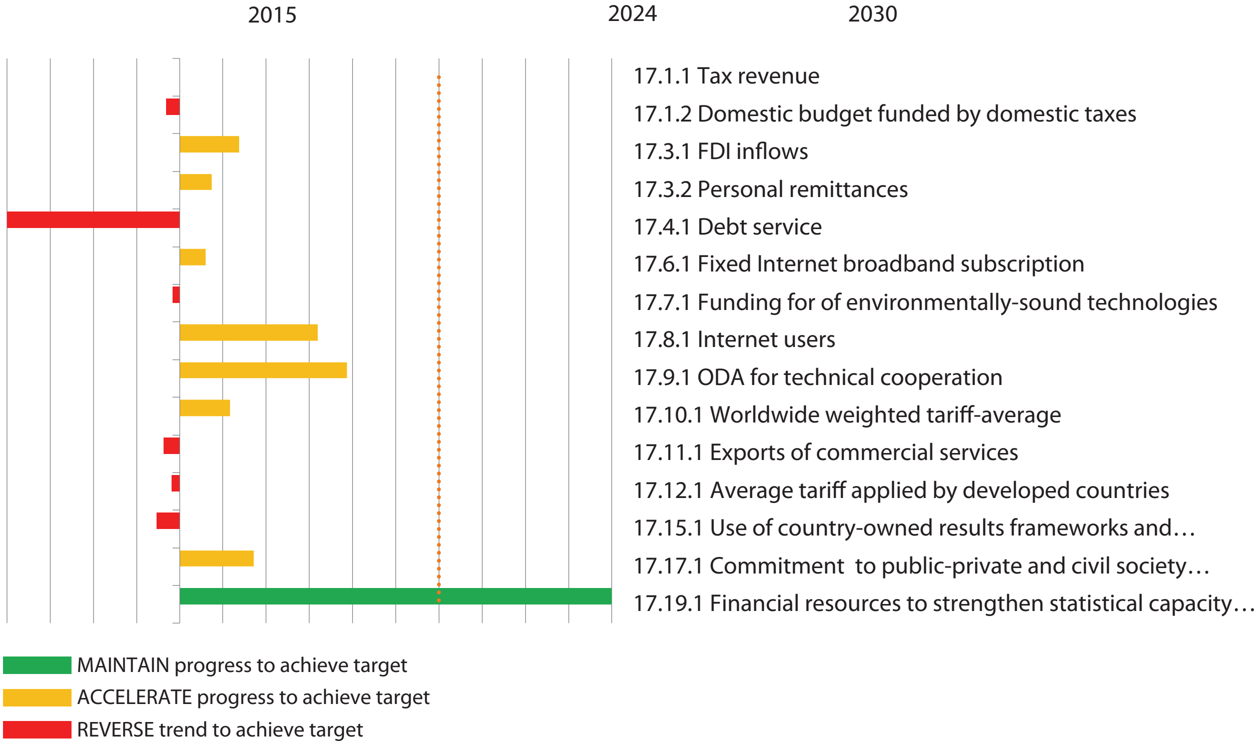
6.2 Conclusions

Africa has made some progress towards SDG 17 and the related Agenda 2063 goals. However significant gaps remain and substantial regional heterogeneities continue to exist, as shown by the many different trends in the implementation of Agenda 2030. Amid raising geopolitical tensions and nationalism, development cooperation and partnerships remain a critical resource for sustainable development to increase the investment and policy changes that would yield the greatest multiplier effects and help achieve prosperity for all by 2030. To achieve SDG 17 in Africa by 2030, African countries will have to accelerate progress against most of the indicators, as illustrated in Figure 6.21 below.

Prioritizing DRM and national savings is essential for inclusive and sustainable development in Africa. Promoting innovative financing initiatives, scaling up ODA with improved allocation, creating an enabling environment for private investment and enhancing STI capacity-building are also essential to address funding gaps and drive sustainable and inclusive development.

Implementing the AfCFTA effectively, enhancing regional integration and South-South cooperation are also key to sustainable development in Africa. Regional and continental institutions should scale up capacity-building programmes targeting SMEs, particularly those led by women and young people, to enable broader participation in the AfCFTA and unlock Africa's

Figure 6.21: Actions that must be taken on SDG 17 indicators for African countries to achieve SDG 17 targets by 2030



Notes: The figures are colour-coded to indicate expected progress. Green is used for indicators with sufficient progress, where the target is likely to be achieved at the current pace. Yellow is used for indicators with insufficient progress to meet the target by 2030, and red is used for regressing indicators.

Source: ECA computations based on date from the SDG Global Database

growth, competitiveness and sustainable development potential.

Additionally, robust and disaggregated data will enhance transparency and accountability and will significantly improve the monitoring of SDGs and policy formulation.

Chapter 7:
Advancing the achievement of the Agendas

7.1 Cross-cutting recommendations

Solidarity is essential – South-South cooperation

In the ever-changing geopolitical global environment with current threats to multilateralism, solidarity is key. South-South cooperation is crucial to forming a common platform to advocate for unique opportunities for Africa. In this regard, countries should integrate their commitments under the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 within national planning and financing frameworks, as it is the clearest way to ensure the implementation of development policies. Countries should also capitalize on the upcoming international conferences, including the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, the 2025 High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development and the Second World Summit for Social Development to advance a unified African position on priorities for the implementation of the two agendas.

Invest in skills and education at all levels

Investment in skills and education at all levels is essential for tapping into the demographic dividend and attaining inclusive development in Africa. An integrated approach to developing skills and education for the workforce, with a focus on vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities, youth and women, will facilitate job creation and social cohesion. Countries need to ensure continued investment in early childhood, primary, secondary, and higher education to enhance critical thinking and specialized expertise. Moreover, promoting vocational training and lifelong learning opportunities would facilitate upskilling and reskilling of the workforce, reducing unemployment and supporting sustainable development.

Invest in youth

Africa is home to the youngest population in the world, with over 60 percent of the total population under the age of 25. Countries should ensure the empowerment of the youth population through education, skills development, entrepreneurship, and access to technology. Countries should support engagement with young people as strategic partners, while promoting the proposed global youth platform as an important avenue for amplifying the voices of young people and increasing their participation in critical policy-related decision-making processes. A holistic strategy involving all stakeholders, such as governments, organizations, and investors, can help support a dynamic youth force leading the growth and development trajectory in Africa.

Mobilize finance and strengthen partnerships

Countries should mobilize finance to accelerate the progress against the SDGs through DRM, international public and private financing, innovative financing sources, debt sustainability and a reform of the global financial architecture to better reflect the unique needs of the African countries. Increased efficiency and transparency of the public expenditure and DRM can substantially contribute to the domestic financing efforts. The importance of PPPs cannot be underestimated. Furthermore, countries need to improve the measurement of economic growth by using natural capital accounting techniques. The practice will make it easier to boost credit ratings and enhance the position from which the continent negotiates access to affordable finance.

In addition, countries should strengthen partnerships to foster sustainable consumption and production methods, including the transition to circular economy models of growth in crucial value chains. Particularly, countries should rigorously review plans and programmes in areas with transformational effects on the attainment of several SDGs, such as infrastructure, science, technology and innovation, digitalization, food systems, renewable energy systems, value added manufacturing and climate action.

Strengthen institutions for sound economic governance

Countries should develop and implement systems for evidence-based mutual accountability at the local, national, regional and international levels. Strong institutions embedded in increased accountability and transparency will facilitate the creation of a mutually reinforcing mechanism for attaining sustainable and inclusive development.

Invest in data infrastructure

Strengthening data collection and use for the design and implementation of interventions and for the tracking of progress towards attainment of the Goals, including through the following measures, are crucial: (i) Enhancement of data integration, data infrastructure and interoperability in all countries, private sector collaboration and data governance; (ii) Capacity-building in relation to data analytics; and (iii) Use of emerging technologies, including AI. Countries should invest in improving the collection, dissemination and analysis of data related to national development plans, SDGs and Agenda 2063. This could be through establishing a special fund. Investing in and conducting regular surveys as well as using administrative data and Big Data would ensure the production of regular, timely and high-quality official statistics to explore progress, gaps and measures to ensure implementation of national plans, SDGs and Agenda 2063. Rwanda, for example, is leveraging technology to optimize decisions making and improve livelihoods (see Box 7.1 below).

Box 7.1: The Rwanda Economy Digitalization Programme: leveraging data insights to improve policymaking, catalyse innovation and improve livelihoods in Rwanda

Launched through a partnership between the Government of Rwanda, Cenfri and the Mastercard Foundation, the Rwanda Economy Digitalization Programme seeks to drive an inclusive shift to a digital economy. Focused on leveraging data analysis to inform policy and private sector decisions, the initiative operates across priority sectors—agriculture, retail trade, tourism, education, transport, and telecommunications—to enhance efficiency and innovation.

In agriculture, the programme supports the Smart Nkunganire System (SNS) and develops commodity price dashboards with MINAGRI to optimize subsidies for smallholder farmers. For retail, it analyses merchant and mobile money data with MINICOM and private entities to identify digital payment adoption gaps and cross-border trading trends. In tourism, it uses data from platforms such as Airbnb and TripAdvisor to improve service quality and digital payment integration, while in education, it leverages the Urubuto school management system to analyse student performance and dropout rates for evidence-based policy. The transport sector initiative digitizes Kigali’s public transport to optimize routes and urban mobility, in line with the country’s Vision 2050.

The programme has built capacity for data-driven decision-making among more than ten public-private partners, including ministries, the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and tech firms such as BK Techouse. By fostering collaboration and data-sharing, it has catalysed digital solutions that enhance productivity, streamline services and support economic growth across key sectors.

Source: Ministry of ICT & Innovation of Rwanda (2025)

7.2 Recommendations on SDG 3

Enhance health financing investment and efficiency

Governments should reinforce efforts to attain the 15 percent of budget allocation to health sector as per the Abuja Declaration adopted by governments of the African Union in 2001. This financing is essential for building resilient health systems that can meet the needs of populations. This should also include innovative financing mechanisms that can mobilize additional resources and improve efficiencies in the use of available resources for health interventions.

In addition, countries should move towards the widespread implementation of a mandatory universal health insurance system to provide access to fundamental health care for the entire population. Countries should support the training of health personnel and foster inclusivity, equity and high quality of services as vital components of universal healthcare coverage systems that are also resilient to economic and environmental shocks.

Promote initiatives for the local production of vaccines, medical consumables and other pharmaceuticals

Countries should promote initiatives for the local production of vaccines, medical consumables and other pharmaceuticals, including by reinforcing capacity-building for national companies operating in the sector, and by leveraging the agreement establishing the AfCFTA. Countries should also ensure quality prevention and preparation initiatives to respond to public health emergencies through strengthening of immunization programmes, long-term investments in water, sanitation and hygiene, enhanced early warning systems for rapid detection and response to health threats, and resilient primary healthcare systems. To this effect, countries should ensure strengthened involvement of academic institutions and their research products in the definition and formulation of health policies and programmes.

Address the health impacts of climate change

Countries in the region need to step up efforts in the health sector to better withstand the impacts of climate change on the health of people in the coming decades. This should include ensuring that significant parts of international climate change financing are made available to countries in the African continent, and that they strengthen the resilience of the health systems in the region. Countries should ensure a monitoring function for the impacts of climate change instead of focusing only on combating the impacts of climate change on health.

Improve health data for evidence-based policy and monitoring

Inadequacies in routine data collection and reporting impede the assessment of health progress and the design of appropriate policy responses. This is evident in some of the gaps that appear in the SDG indicator assessment done in the present report. Furthermore, there is need for standardized protocols and disaggregation of data by age and gender to better understand health challenges and inform policy decisions. Countries in the continent need to invest, in this regard, in strengthening their health data systems and data reporting protocols. Countries should strengthen the quality of statistics through the use of granular data, innovation, digital health solutions and AI, and data disaggregated by age, geography and sex to ensure more sophisticated and data-led health interventions and targeted, evidence-based health policies and programmes, as has been done to reduce and eliminate the vertical transmission of HIV.

Countries need to establish and improve health management information systems to ensure evidence-based policymaking. To that effect, investing and conducting regular surveys are crucial to ensure high quality official statistics. In addition, improving and standardizing the use of country health administrative data will contribute to getting regular, timely and high-quality health statistics for policy decisions.

Address the socioeconomic and environmental drivers of health

Health is not only a medical issue. Health outcomes of the population are heavily shaped by prevailing socioeconomic and environmental conditions in countries across Africa. Recognizing and addressing the socioeconomic and environmental determinants of health, such as inequality, education, pollution, income, and housing, offers an opportunity to improve health outcomes. Implementing policies that promote social equity and access to essential services enables governments to create environments that support healthy lifestyles and well-being. This holistic approach can lead to sustainable improvements in population health. Health concerns, in this regard, need to go beyond ministries of health and be fully integrated into national development policy formulation and planning processes. Furthermore, countries should consider health dimensions when formulating all development policies (see Box 7.2).

Box 7.2: National health insurance programmes in Nigeria and South Africa

South African National Health Insurance (NHI) – A path to universal health coverage

The NHI represents the South African government's strategic initiative to achieve universal health coverage by establishing a centrally managed fund that will procure healthcare services from both public and private providers. Under the NHI, all eligible South African residents, as defined in the NHI Act, will access healthcare services without making direct payments at the point of care, with funding sourced through general taxation and progressive contributions. The NHI seeks to enhance equity, efficiency and affordability within the health system by consolidating resources and leveraging economies of scale. Since its inception in 2011, the NHI has progressed through pilot projects in 2015, culminating in the signature of the NHI Act into law on 15 May 2024. Implementation will proceed in two structured phases from 2023 to 2028, laying the foundation for a reformed, integrated and sustainable national health system.

Nigeria – advancing Universal Health Coverage in Nigeria: strategic policy framework

The Nigerian Health Financing Policy and Strategy (2017) provides a comprehensive framework aimed at achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by ensuring that all Nigerians have access to timely, affordable, high-quality, efficient and equitable healthcare services without the risk of financial hardship. A major step towards realizing this objective is the enactment of the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) Act in 2022, which for the first time makes health insurance mandatory for all Nigerians and legal residents. This legislative development represents a pivotal advancement in the country's commitment to building an inclusive and sustainable health system.

Source: Department of Health, Republic of South Africa (2024) and NESG (2024)

Department of Health, Republic of South Africa. (2024). National Health Insurance Act, 2024 (Act No. 20 of 2024). Pretoria: Government Printing Works. NHI – Home – National Department of Health

Countries should strengthen the quality of health care and well-being by placing greater focus on neglected issues, such as nutrition, mental health and HIV/AIDS, giving special consideration to vulnerable groups and minorities.

7.3 Recommendations for SDG 5

Strengthen laws, policies and services to increase gender mainstreaming and awareness

Countries should strengthen laws, policies and support services to prevent and respond to GBV, close the economic and political gender gap, dismantle harmful gender stereotypes, discrimination and ensure equitable access to health care and education. Countries should promote the establishment of a gender unit in the various ministerial departments to ensure the integration of gender into sectoral policies and implement a gender-sensitive budget. Morocco and Ghana, for example, have taken several steps towards gender mainstreaming and achieving gender equality in leadership (see Box 7.3 below).

Countries need to implement robust, evidence-based policies, targeted interventions, and a commitment to shifting social and cultural norms to overcome barriers and accelerate progress. In this regard, increased awareness of gender-related issues, particularly for both heads of households to reduce violence against women, is instrumental.

Promote gender-responsive data for informed decision-making

Countries should strengthen data systems that have a focus on gender by investing in the collection of reliable gender statistics and data that are disaggregated by sex, standardizing indicators and leveraging technology to facilitate the creation of evidence-based policies and ensure accountability for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

Access to science, technology and innovation

Countries ensure that women and girls have access to opportunities in science, technology and innovation through digital learning and literacy programmes to help them to gain employment in emerging sectors.

Support unpaid care and domestic work by social service

Countries should promote the equitable redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work by investing in high-quality social services, ensuring broader access to affordable childcare, leveraging appropriate technology, supporting fair parental leave and taking unpaid care work into account in policies and national statistical accounts.

Adopt a multi-stakeholder inclusive approach

Countries should invest in mentorship programmes, safeguard civic space and enforce gender quotas to enhance the meaningful participation and transformative leadership of women and girls in public, private and political decision-making. Collective commitment from governments, civil society, the private sector, and individuals to address these ongoing challenges is essential to achieve SDG 5. With focused action on legal frameworks, economic empowerment, education, and GBV, gender equality can be realized, paving the way for a more inclusive, equitable, and just future for all (see Box 7.3).

Box 7.3: Strengthening laws and policies for women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming

In Morocco, several actions have been or are being taken in relation to SDG 5 to combat gender discrimination, including:

- The 2011 Moroccan Constitution reaffirms and commits to banning and combating all forms of discrimination against women.
- In line with this, several laws mention the principles of gender equality. These include, among others, Law No. 19.12 adopted in 2016 on working and employment conditions for domestic workers, reforms to the Labour Code and Law No. 79-14, ratified in 2017, on combating all forms of discrimination. Organizational Law No. 04-21 and Organizational Law No. 06.21 were adopted in 2021 to improve female representation in the House of Representatives and local government councils.
- The establishment of the National Commission for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in 2022.
- The launch of the reform of the Family Code in 2022. To this end, a process, conducted in a collective and participatory manner since September 2023, is open to civil society and researchers to prepare proposals for amending the Family Code with the aim of strengthening family balance in accordance with the Constitution and international conventions ratified by Morocco. Emphasis was also placed on strengthening women's access to ownership and control of agricultural land.

- Strengthening gender-responsive budgeting (Organic Law No. 130-13 relating to the 2015 Finance Act emphasizes the institutionalization of results-based management from a gender perspective).
- Launching programmes for the economic empowerment of women and strengthening their employment opportunities, etc.

In Ghana, women's representation in decision-making positions continues to show modest improvement. The proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament increased from 36 seats (13.1 percent) in 2021 to 40 seats (14.5 percent) in 2023. While this represents a positive trend, women's participation remains significantly below the global average and far from parity. The judiciary has demonstrated relatively higher and more consistent female representation. The number of female Supreme Court judges increased from 23 percent to 31 percent between 2017 and 2021, and the number of female High Court judges reached 41 percent in 2024, the highest among all categories.

Ghana also passed an Affirmative Action law in 2024 to further deepen legal frameworks to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. This affirmative law promotes gender equity and increases women's participation in governance and decision-making. The law sets progressive targets for gender representation, aiming for 30 percent by 2026, 35 percent by 2028 and 50 percent by 2030.

Source: Government of Morocco and Ghana (2025). Case study provided for the 2025 ASDR input.

7.4 Recommendations on SDG 8

Ensure pro-employment macroeconomic and strategic policies

Countries should support adopting pro-employment macroeconomic and strategic industrial policies and facilitate export-led growth, economic diversification and climate-smart growth, while ensuring proper coordination and knowledge-sharing among ministries, departments and agencies to ensure integrated planning, proper monitoring and efficiency in the implementation of such policies. Africa must prioritize productive employment creation across sectors, diversify economies, and adopt pro-employment macroeconomic policies, as emphasized by the AU Specialized Technical Committee and the African Regional Forum. Macroeconomic frameworks should evolve to target decent, inclusive, and sustainable jobs, with explicit employment targets integrated into national budgets, fiscal and monetary policies, and development plans.

Countries need to strengthen political commitment to economic growth and employment and follow through on the global and continental commitments contained in the financing initiatives of the International Labour Organization, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

Promote a strong business environment including through promoting formalization

Promoting multiple pathways for formalization of informal workers and businesses, in line with the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204) is essential. There is a need to accelerate action by increasing the availability of opportunities for decent employment with access to social protection for the millions of workers in the informal economy, while at the same time improving the skills and productive capacities of people and enterprises, particularly MSMEs, to enter the formal economy.[1] However, it requires both digitally-savvy leaders and a workforce capable of making digital transformation changes happen. Digital transformation can facilitate e-governance, financial inclusion, trade facilitation, and credit access while boosting economic growth. Financial inclusion can also be encouraged by deliberate payment policies requiring accounts for disbursements.

Box 7.4: Advancing decent work and job creation in Lesotho and Zimbabwe

Accelerating job creation in Lesotho through the Big Fast Results approach

In 2022, Lesotho launched the Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project (CAFI) with support from the World Bank. The CAFI Project aims to increase access to business support services and financial products for MSMEs and entrepreneurs, especially those owned by women and young people. The business and entrepreneurs selected receive grants and mentoring on their business models and plans and their progress is assisted and monitored over an "incubation" period, with the goal of scaling up from start-up/concept stage to an investable stage. The first cohort of 50 started their incubation between November 2023 and May 2024. The six-year project, which began in 2022, seeks to incubate 500 enterprises by 2028 under the Lesotho Entrepreneurship Hub programme.

Advancing decent work and youth employment in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, the Business Growth for Young Entrepreneurs (BG4YE) project, a partnership between the ILO, the Zimbabwean government and the African Development Bank, aims to boost economic opportunities for young people and women through sustainable enterprises. Launched to enhance on-the-job skills and business development, the project has made notable strides. It has impacted 1,017 entrepreneurs (668 women and 349 men) across districts including Hauna, Mutare and Bulawayo, generating 2,246 jobs (1,196 for women and 1,050 for men). Using the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) and Sustainable and Resilient Enterprises (SURE) training programmes, BG4YE has helped 80 percent of supported businesses expand into new lines. It has also built the capacity of government officials from the Ministry of Women, Mines and Youths and 22 Business Development Services (BDS) providers using ILO tools, fostering a more robust ecosystem for young and women-led enterprises.

Source: World Bank (2024); International Labour Organization (2025)

7.5 Recommendations on SDG 14

Strengthen governance and institutions at different levels

Accelerating progress towards the achievement of Goal 14 by implementing the strategies of the African Union on maritime and ocean governance and the blue economy, and associated subregional and national policies, strategies, and action plans is crucial. Countries should establish dedicated blue economy units to facilitate cross-sectoral coordination and governance, ensuring effective management of marine and freshwater resources.

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[1] Digital Entrepreneurship and Skills | African Development Bank Group (afdb.org)

Investing in education and capacity-building programmes for emerging scientists and local experts to advance ocean science and improve marine management practices is critical. Also, countries should enhance scientific capacity, data systems and policy coordination with a view to unlocking greater private and domestic investment. Countries should also foster the development of training and vocational programmes for which the curricula include issues related to the blue economy and improve access to education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Countries should ensure greater collaboration among African nations and strengthen partnerships with global initiatives to effectively address transboundary challenges, such as IUU fishing and marine pollution. Countries should raise awareness about the importance of sustainable marine and freshwater resource management among local communities, stakeholders, and the general public to foster a culture of conservation and sustainability. Furthermore, countries should scale up investment in research, vocational training, ocean science infrastructure, ocean entrepreneurship and the restoration of coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, including by improving the measurement and valuation of blue natural capital, promoting scientific cooperation and ensuring that local communities benefit from and contribute to ocean preservation. Strengthened regional cooperation and capacity-building efforts to enhance the collective response to ocean-related challenges, particularly in the ratification and implementation of international ocean agreements is crucial.

Furthermore, African stakeholders should ensure that the voice of Africa is heard in efforts to shape global ocean governance, including by ratifying and implementing major relevant treaties, such as the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction and the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, and by contributing to the finalization of the proposed United Nations treaty on global plastics.

Ensure public awareness, education and capacity-building for various stakeholders

Countries should raise awareness about the importance of sustainable marine and freshwater resource management among local communities, stakeholders and the general public to foster a culture of conservation and sustainability. Furthermore, countries should scale up investment in research, vocational training, ocean science infrastructure, ocean entrepreneurship and the restoration of coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, including by improving the measurement and valuation of blue natural capital, promoting scientific cooperation and ensuring that local communities benefit from and contribute to ocean preservation.

Investing in education and capacity-building programmes for emerging scientists and local experts to advance ocean science and improve marine management practices is critical. Countries should enhance scientific capacity, data systems and policy coordination with a view to unlocking greater private and domestic investment. Countries should also foster the development of training and vocational programmes for which the curricula include issues related to the blue economy and improve access to education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Implementing enhanced waste management practices, such as incentivizing recycling systems and community awareness campaigns, in African coastal cities to reduce pollution and improve public health is warranted.

Increase investment and innovative financing mechanisms

Countries should encourage investment in aquaculture to increase productivity in the sector as a share of GDP. Leveraging sustainable and innovative resources, such as blue bonds, debt swaps, diaspora financing (see for example the cases of Egypt and Morocco in the Box below) and opportunities under the AfCFTA to finance initiatives that can help protect the region's oceans is crucial. Further, innovative financing sources could be used to support ocean-related projects involving private sector participation that align with investment goals.

Support local communities

Enhancing the participation of Indigenous people and local communities in MSP and management to improve conservation efforts and uphold human rights is crucial. Promoting inclusive job creation in the blue economy, focusing on opportunities for women, young people, people with disabilities, Indigenous people and coastal communities, is needed. Countries should use local Indigenous knowledge, support youth-led initiatives and invest in development that is beneficial to nature and actions that are focused on the blue economy, with a view to balancing economic growth and job creation with ecosystem regeneration(see Box 7.5).. Furthermore, countries should develop legal and regulatory frameworks that recognize and protect access rights for small-scale fisheries, while promoting the sustainable economic benefits derived from marine resources.

Improve data collection and monitoring

Developing robust systems for data collection and reporting on key indicators such as marine health, fish stocks, pollution levels and the effectiveness of management practices to inform evidence-based decision-making is instrumental to ensuring the sustainable development of the marine ecosystem.

Implement ecosystem-based approaches

Promoting the adoption of ecosystem-based management approaches to enhance

Box 7.5: Financing sustainable marine and coastal conservation efforts in Egypt and Morocco

Protecting marine life in the Red Sea in Egypt

In September 2024, **Egypt** launched the Egyptian Red Sea Initiative (ERSI), which aims to reduce drivers of coral reef degradation while simultaneously developing new finance sources and mechanisms for reef-positive business and livelihoods. To ensure that the Egyptian Red Sea region's coral reefs continue to provide vital ecological and socioeconomic services, the programme will also advance science on coral reef resilience, identify and protect climate refugia and implement sustainable financing mechanisms for MPAs that harbour critical coral reef ecosystems. By establishing and operationalizing a new Egyptian Fund for Coral Reefs (EFCR), which will leverage finance for reef-positive businesses that support conservation, economic development, community livelihoods and enhanced community resilience to climate change, the programme will accelerate the development of reef-positive business models, especially in the eco-tourism, sustainable fisheries and waste management sectors. With additional finance for conservation and investment from the private sector, the programme is expected to leverage at least an additional US$ 45 million in grants through the EFCR to support coral reef conservation in the Egyptian Red Sea.

Sustainable management of coastal and marine resources in Morocco

Morocco, leveraging its extensive coastline, has been actively advancing its blue economy. In May 2022, with a US$ 350 million loan from the World Bank, Morocco launched a blue economy programme centred on MSP, which aims to improve job creation and economic growth, as well as food security and the sustainability and resilience of natural resources. The country also focuses on marine conservation through sanctuaries and artificial reefs, builds climate resilience in coastal tourism by transforming MSMEs and protecting coastlines and promotes aquaculture development with the support of international institutions. These concerted efforts aim to create jobs, enhance food security and ensure sustainable and inclusive growth of the blue economy.

Source: UNEP Egypt (2024); World Bank (2023)

resilience and health across marine and freshwater environments is critical. Strategies for achieving SDG 14 should align with broader efforts related to poverty reduction, food security and climate resilience, reinforcing the interconnected nature of these goals.

7.6 Recommendations on SDG 17

Mobilize resource and ensure economic and financial diversification

Diversifying sources of financing with more emphasis on domestic revenue mobilization is critical for the sustainable implementation of SDGs. In this regard, domestic savings, remittances and diaspora investment can also play a key role in addressing financial constraints and increasing investments. Furthermore, countries should combat corruption and increase transparency in all aspects of resource mobilization, with a view to achieving sustainable borrowing, minimizing losses and enhancing the efficiency of resource use (see Box 7.6).

Amid declining donor funding, expanded and sustainable domestic revenue generation could subsequently be channelled to plug gaps in development projects that were previously reliant on external funding sources. This requires institutional development, combined with sustained reforms in revenue administration, anchored in a medium-term strategic framework. Such reforms strengthen DRM, reduce structural dependence on external aid and facilitate a more resilient adjustment to donor disengagement.

Equally important are public financial management reforms, including the management of fiscal risks, strengthening revenue collection and expenditure control. These reforms will help channel resources to growth-enhancing sectors and pro-poor initiatives. In fragile and conflict-affected countries, transparency and accountability with robust oversight systems as well as strategic de-risking instruments are key to ensuring effective service delivery that leaves no one behind, including women and vulnerable groups.

Promote regional trade and integration

The agreement establishing the AfCFTA offers a transformative opportunity to boost intra-African trade. Addressing trade barriers and infrastructure deficits and fostering national productive capabilities, regional value chains and trade integration will result in significant long-run gains, strengthen the economic competitiveness of the continent and accelerate diversification and industrialization. Deepening regional integration and collaboration to maximize the potential of the AfCFTA will require collaboration between regulatory bodies and policymakers.

Advocate for the reform of the international financial architecture

It is important to reform international financial architecture with a view to bringing down the excessive cost of sovereign borrowing, increasing access to adequate financing, including long-term concessional financing - aligning debt sustainability with the SDGs and national priorities and considering resilience building and international human rights obligations. Countries need to advocate for fair debt resolution mechanisms and global financial reform that is grounded in human rights. In this regard, all financing strategies address gender equality and inclusion.

Access external concessional financing

Accessing external concessional financing will provide additional resources to address economic and financial crises facing many African countries while maintaining debt sustainability. It is important to scale up climate financing and meet commitments without diverting resources from the existing ODA commitments. There should be adequate grants-based climate and environmental finances, with direct access to the most vulnerable groups. Increasing Africa's access to climate finance requires building internal human and institutional capacity to engage in climate finance negotiations. It is also essential to increase the allocation of resources towards adaptation, clearly delineating climate finance from ODA and establishing robust tracking systems for climate finance contributions.

Engage key stakeholders

Strengthening public-private, inclusive and multilevel partnerships with non-governmental organizations, communities and the diaspora, and foster coordination that is aligned with national priorities in order to leverage resources, technical expertise and implementation capacity is critical. Engaging in the private sector is also essential to address funding gaps and drive sustainable and inclusive development. With the projected decline in donor funding, it will be crucial for African countries to develop new partnership, including the private sector, public-private partnerships, the diaspora and philanthropic groups. Corporate social responsibility initiatives and strengthen existing partnership initiatives on financing such as the G20's Compact with Africa. The African Union should strengthen its role in monitoring the impact of existing and future partnerships.

Box 7.6: Deepening avenues for financing for development

Burkina Faso has developed various alternative and innovative financing initiatives. The mechanisms have been put in place to support sustainable development projects. The various mechanisms consist of PPPs, remittances from migrant workers, foreign direct investment (FDI) and green and climate financing.

The ppp portfolio has improved and new agreements have been signed. Ten (10) contracts were registered between 2016 and 2022 for a cumulative amount of 598.4 billion CFA francs.

Remittances from Burkinabe citizens abroad constitute an important source of income for households and also for productive investment. Over the period 2016-2022, the cumulative amount reached 1,752.4 billion CFA francs, with an average annual growth rate of 4.7 percent. As a percentage of GDP, migrant remittances represent an annual average of 2.6 percent over the period (2016-2022).

Cumulative inward foreign direct investment in Burkina Faso over the period 2016-2022 amounted to 165.2 billion CFA francs. As a percentage of GDP, FDI represented an annual average of 0.2 percent over the period.

Madagascar has an aid management platform that collects all ODA data, in compliance with the principles of accountability and transparency. The site is publicly accessible for those interested in studying ODA.

Furthermore, Madagascar is currently drafting a Development Finance Assessment as part of its Integrated National Financing Framework.

Source: Government of Burkina Faso and Madagascar (2025). Case study provided for the 2025 ASDR input.

Chapter 8:

ANNEX

SDGs assessment: Methodology and data availability assessment

1. Methodology

- Selection of the indicators

Data used in this analysis are compiled from the SDG global database as per the latest update of April 2025.[1] Indicators are selected based on the availability of two or more data points for more than 40% of the countries in the corresponding region or sub-region. Accordingly, out of the 93 indicators under SDG 3,5,8,14 and 17, we have used 54 indicators having sufficient data to track the progress.

- Measures for tracking progress

As mentioned above, two principal measures are used to assess regional and sub-regional progress towards the SDGs:

A. The Current Status Index: it measures progress towards achieving a specific SDG target since 2015.

B. Anticipated progress Index: it measures the gap between predicted value of the indicator and specified target value, it gives an indication how likely will the target values be achieved by 2030.

Both indices are constructed at the level of sub-indicator (series, disaggregation, or subcomponents of an indicator) and can be aggregated at indicator, target, and goal levels.

- The Current Status Index

Given a specified SDG target value for each indicator, the indicator values for current year and 2015 can be used to construct a metric that measures the progress made since 2015, in relation to the progress needed for the SDG target by 2030.

Denoting indicator values for 2015 and the current year by I_0 and I_{cv} and the target value for 2030 by “TV”, and setting the normalized values of the indicator at 2015 and 2030 at 0 and 10, respectively, the current status index is calculated as:
when desirable direction is clear.

$$I_{cv}^{N} = \frac{I_{cv} - I_0}{|TV - I_0|} \times D \quad \textit{in which}$$

$$D = \begin{cases} 10 & \textit{increasing is desirable} \\ -10 & \textit{decreasing is desirable} \end{cases}$$

For parity indicators, the value is:

$$I_{cv}^{N} = \begin{cases} 10 - \dfrac{|TV - I_{cv}|}{|TV - I_0|} \times 10 \quad \textit{if} \quad |TV - I_{cv}| \leq \quad \text{[illegible]} \\ \dfrac{|I_{cv} - I_0|}{|TV - I_0|} \times (-10) \quad\quad \textit{Otherwise} \end{cases}$$

The Current Status Index is normalized to be in the interval [-10;10]. When the average overall normalized values under each goal provide an index range between 0

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[1] https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database

and 10, it means that the region/sun region has progressed. While the negative values indicate that the region/sub region has regressed. Moreover, if the current value of an indicator has already reached or exceeded the target value, the index is automatically set to 10.

- The Anticipated Progress Index

This index compares the predicted (anticipated) progress with the targeted progress. By predicting the indicator value for the target year and benchmarking the predicted value against the target value, we can identify how close we can get to the target by the end of the target year (2030), assuming the previous pace of progress.

Denoting the predicted value of the indicator I for the target year by It, and value in the base year by Ib, one can approximate the progress gap by P when no regression has occurred, and by 100 - P when indicator value has regressed since the base year. If desirable direction is clear from the target, the value of P is defined as:

$$P = \frac{|TV - I_t|}{|TV - I_b|} \times 100$$

In the case of parity indicators, we consider no regression has occurred if

$$|TV - I_t| \leq |tv - I_b|$$

Anticipated Progress Index only needs to be calculated for indicators that are not expected to achieve the target. Indicators for which the predicted value has already reached or is expected to reach the target by 2030, or exceeded the achievement level, are automatically classified as “will be achieved” and Anticipated Progress Index is set to 0.

Based on expected progress, the value of P ranges from 0 to 100. If there is a predicted regression from the current level, P will be greater than 100.

P may be interpreted as the extra effort or acceleration needed to meet the target when the value is less than or equal to 100, and 100 - P is the size of regression when it is greater than 100. Indicators are classified into three predefined achievement levels:

$$\left[\begin{array}{ll} 0 \leq P \leq 10 & (Will\ meet\ the\ target\ with\ current \\ & rate\ or\ minor\ extra\ effort) \\ 10 < P \leq 100 & (Need\ to\ accelerate\ the\ current\ rate \\ & of\ progress\ to\ achieve\ the\ target) \\ P > 100 & (Regression\ or\ no\ progress\ expected) \end{array}\right.$$

- Aggregation

The average of the progress indexes is calculated to measure the overall progress at the region/subregion level. When more than one variation for an indicator exists (for example indicator 17.10.1; Worldwide weighted tariff-average, most-favored-nation status, by type of product (%)), all variants are used in calculations. Each variant of indicator is weighted such that the sum of the weights under each indicator is 1. Finally, a weighted average of the progress indices is computed as progress index for that indicator.

- Target values

Indicator Number	Series Description	Target Calculation Method	Target (Rate)
Goal 3			
3.1.1	Maternal mortality ratio	Direct	70
3.1.2	Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (%)	Direct	100
3.2.1	Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	Direct	25
3.2.1	Under-five mortality rate, by sex (deaths per 1,000 live births)	Direct	25
3.2.2	Neonatal mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	Direct	12
3.3.1	Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex and age (per 1,000 uninfected population)	Direct	0
3.3.2	Tuberculosis incidence (per 100,000 population)	Direct	0
3.3.3	Malaria incidence per 1,000 population at risk (per 1,000 population)	Direct	0
3.3.4	Prevalence of hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) (%)	Direct	0
3.3.5	Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases (number)	Direct	0
3.4.1	Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease (probability)	Factor2015	-0.7
3.4.2	Suicide mortality rate, by sex (deaths per 100,000 population)	AvgRateTop5	-0.5
3.5.2	Alcohol consumption per capita (aged 15 years and older) within a calendar year (litres of pure alcohol)	AvgRateTop5	-0.5
3.6.1	Death rate due to road traffic injuries, by sex (per 100,000 population)	Factor2015	-0.5
3.7.1	Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods (% of women aged 15-49 years)	Direct	100
3.7.2	Adolescent birth rate (per 1,000 women aged 15-19 and 10-14 years)	Factor2015	-0.4
3.8.1	Universal health coverage (UHC) service coverage index	Direct	100
3.8.2	Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health (greater than 10%) as a share of total household expenditure or income (%)	AvgRateTop5	-0.2

Indicator Number	Series Description	Target Calculation Method	Target (Rate)
3.8.2	Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health (greater than 25%) as a share of total household expenditure or income (%)	AvgRateTop5	-0.1
3.9.3	Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisonings, by sex (deaths per 100,000 population)	AvgRateTop5	-0.5
3.a.1	Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older, by sex (%)	AvgRateTop5	-0.5
3.b.1	Proportion of the target population with access to 3 doses of diphtheria- tetanus-pertussis (DTP3) (%)	Direct	100
3.b.1	Proportion of the target population with access to affordable medicines and vaccines on a sustainable basis, human papillomavirus (HPV) (%)	Direct	100
3.b.1	Proportion of the target population with access to measles-containing- vaccine second dose (MCV2) (%)	Direct	100
3.b.1	Proportion of the target population with access to pneumococcal conjugate 3rd dose (PCV3) (%)	Direct	100
3.b.2	Total official development assistance to medical research and basic heath sectors, net disbursement, by recipient countries (millions of constant 2020 United States dollars)	Factor2015	(2)
3.c.1	Health worker density, by type of occupation (per 10,000 population)	AvgRateTop5	(16)
3.c.1	Health worker density, by type of occupation (per 10,000 population)	AvgRateTop5	(4.5)
3.c.1	Health worker density, by type of occupation (per 10,000 population)	AvgRateTop5	(64.6)
3.c.1	Health worker density, by type of occupation (per 10,000 population)	AvgRateTop5	(4.6)
3.d.1	International Health Regulations (IHR) capacity, by type of IHR capacity (%)	Direct	100
	Goal 5		
5.2.1	Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age married or in a union before age 15 (%)	Direct	0
5.3.1	Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation, by age (%)	Direct	0
5.5.1	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (% of total number of seats)	Direct	50
5.5.2	Proportion of women in managerial positions - 13th ICLS (%)	Direct	50
5.5.2	Proportion of women in senior and middle management positions - 13th ICLS (%)	Direct	50

Indicator Number	Series Description	Target Calculation Method	Target (Rate)
5.6.1	Proportion of women who make their own informed decisions regarding contraceptive use (% of women aged 15-49 years)	Direct	100
5.6.1	Proportion of women who make their own informed decisions regarding reproductive health care (% of women aged 15-49 years)	Direct	100
	Goal 8		
8.1.1	Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita (%)	Special	7
8.10.1	Number of automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults	AvgTop5	60.5
8.10.1	Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults	AvgTop5	29.4
8.10.2	Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a financial institution or mobile-money-service provider, by sex (% of adults aged 15 years and older)	Direct	100
8.10.2	Proportion of adults (15 years and older) active in labour force with an account at a financial institution or mobile-money-service provider (% of adults aged 15 years and older)	Direct	100
8.10.2	Proportion of adults (15 years and older) out of labour force with an account at a financial institution or mobile-money-service provider (% of adults aged 15 years and older)	Direct	100
8.2.1	Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person (%)	Special	5.25
8.3.1	Proportion of informal employment, by sector and sex (ILO harmonized estimates) - 13th ICLS (%)	AvgRateTop5	-0.9
8.3.1	Proportion of informal employment, by sector and sex (ILO harmonized estimates) - 13th ICLS (%)	AvgRateTop5	-0.5
8.3.1	Proportion of informal employment, by sector and sex (ILO harmonized estimates) - 13th ICLS (%)	AvgRateTop5	-0.6
8.4.2	Domestic material consumption per unit of GDP, by type of raw material (kilograms per constant 2015 United States dollars)	AvgRateTop5	-0.6
8.4.2	Domestic material consumption per unit of GDP, by type of raw material (kilograms per constant 2015 United States dollars)	AvgRateTop5	-0.4
8.4.2	Domestic material consumption per unit of GDP, by type of raw material (kilograms per constant 2015 United States dollars)	AvgRateTop5	-0.3
8.4.2	Domestic material consumption per unit of GDP, by type of raw material (kilograms per constant 2015 United States dollars)	AvgRateTop5	-0.5

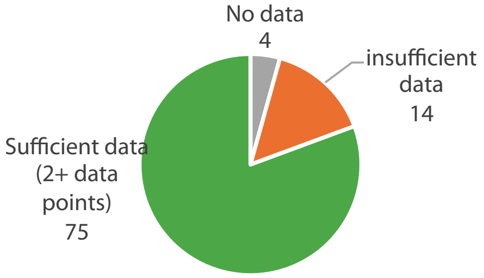
Indicator Number	Series Description	Target Calculation Method	Target (Rate)
8.4.2	Domestic material consumption per unit of GDP, by type of raw material (kilograms per constant 2015 United States dollars)	AvgRateTop5	-1
8.4.2	Domestic material consumption per unit of GDP, by type of raw material (kilograms per constant 2015 United States dollars)	AvgRateTop5	-0.1
8.4.2	Domestic material consumption per unit of GDP, by type of raw material (kilograms per constant 2015 United States dollars)	AvgRateTop5	-0.2
8.5.2	Unemployment rate, by sex and age - 13th ICLS (%)	AvgRateTop5	-0.1
8.5.2	Unemployment rate, by sex and disability - 13th ICLS (%)	AvgRateTop5	-0.2
8.6.1	Proportion of youth not in education, employment or training, by sex and age - 13th ICLS (%)	AvgRateTop5	-0.6
8.8.2	Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation	Direct	0
8.9.1	Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP (%)	AvgRateTop5	(1.1)
8.a.1	Total official flows (commitments) for Aid for Trade, by recipient countries (millions of constant 2020 United States dollars)	Factor2015	(2)
8.a.1	Total official flows (disbursement) for Aid for Trade, by recipient countries (millions of constant 2020 United States dollars)	Factor2015	(2)
8.b.1	Existence of a developed and operationalized national strategy for youth employment, as a distinct strategy or as part of a national employment strategy	Direct	3
Goal 14			
14.1.1	Beach litter originating from national land-based sources that ends in the beach (%)	Direct	0
14.1.1	Beach litter originating from national land-based sources that ends in the beach (Tonnes)	Direct	0
14.1.1	Exported beach litter originating from national land-based sources (Tonnes)	Direct	0
14.1.1	Beach litter originating from national land-based sources that ends in the ocean (%)	Direct	0
14.1.1	Beach litter originating from national land-based sources that ends in the ocean (Tonnes)	Direct	0
14.1.1	Beach litter per square kilometre (Number)	Direct	0
14.1.1	Chlorophyll-a anomaly, remote sensing (%)	Direct	0

Indicator Number	Series Description	Target Calculation Method	Target (Rate)
14.1.1	Chlorophyll-a deviations, remote sensing (%)	Direct	0.01
14.5.1	Average proportion of Marine Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) covered by protected areas (%)	Direct	10
14.6.1	Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (level of implementation: 1 lowest to 5 highest)	Direct	5
14.7.1	Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP	AvgRateTop5	(8.4)
14.b.1	Degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/ institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries (level of implementation: 1 lowest to 5 highest)	Direct	5
Goal 17			
17.1.1	Total government revenue (budgetary central government) as a proportion of GDP (%)	Special	33
17.1.2	Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes (% of GDP)	AvgRateTop5	(2.9)
17.10.1	Worldwide weighted tariff-average, most-favoured-nation status, by type of product (%)	Direct	0
17.10.1	Worldwide weighted tariff-average, preferential status, by type of product (%)	Direct	1
17.11.1	Developing countries and least developed countries share of global merchandise exports (%)	Factor2015	(2)
17.11.1	Developing countries and least developed countries share of global services exports (%)	Factor2015	(2)
17.11.1	Developing countries and least developed countries share of global merchandise imports (%)	Factor2015	0
17.11.1	Developing countries and least developed countries share of global services imports (%)	Factor2015	0
17.12.1	Average tariff applied by developed countries, most-favored nation status, by type of product (%)	Direct	0
17.12.1	Average tariff applied by developed countries, preferential status, by type of product (%)	Direct	0
17.15.1	Proportion of project objectives in new development interventions drawn from country-led result frameworks - data by recipient (%)	Direct	100
17.15.1	Proportion of results indicators drawn from country-led result frameworks - data by recipient (%)	Direct	100
17.15.1	Extent of use of country-owned results frameworks and planning tools by providers of development cooperation - data by recipient (%)	Direct	100

2. Data Availability Assessment

The analysis draws on the global SDG database, as last updated in April 2025, focusing on five priority goals: SDG 3, 5, 8, 14, and 17. The assessment indicates that significant data gaps persist across Africa. Of the 93 indicators reviewed under these five goals, 75 indicators (81%) have sufficient data available, defined as at least two data points for at least 40% of countries in the continent. Fourteen indicators (15%) have insufficient data, and four indicators (4%) lack any data for African countries.

No of indicators according to data availability in Africa, 2025

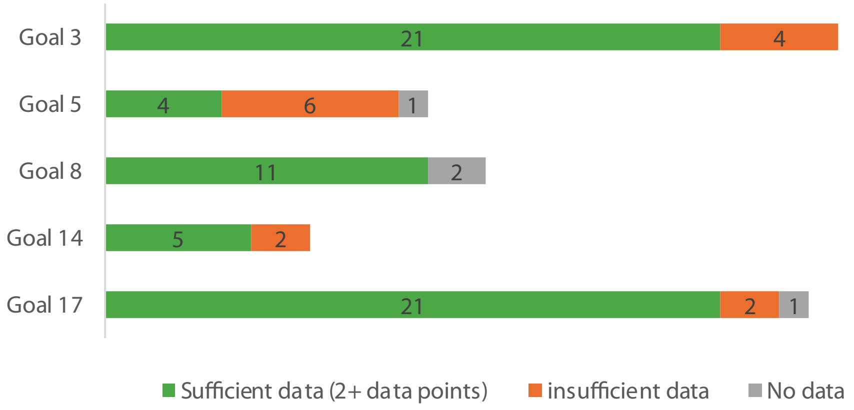


At the goal level, data availability varies widely across the five selected SDGs. Most indicators for Goal 3 and Goal 17 have sufficient data, while Goal 8 also shows good coverage. However, there are significant gaps for Goal 5 with only 4 indicators having sufficient data, while 6 indicators remain insufficient and 1 indicator lacking any data.

Data gaps remain a significant problem for SDG monitoring in Africa. According to the current assessment, the share of indicators with sufficient data varies widely across countries, from as low as 39% in Eritrea and Libya to as high as 69% in Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal. On average, just over half of the indicators (2+ data points) have sufficient data across the continent.

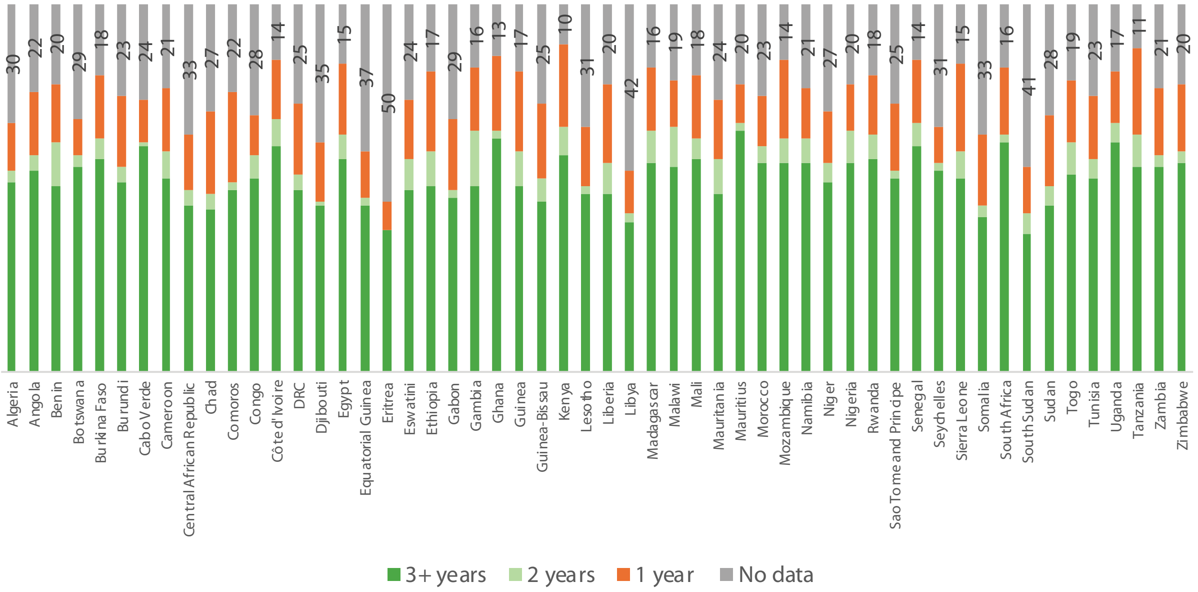
Eleven out of all African countries, including: Côte d'Ivoire; Gambia; Ghana; Madagascar; Malawi; Nigeria; Rwanda; Senegal; South Africa; and Tanzania are better positioned, with at least 65% of their indicators meeting the threshold for sufficient data. However, countries including Equatorial Guinea, Libya, South Sudan, and Eritrea face the most severe data shortages, with more than 40% of indicators lacking sufficient data.

No of indicators according to data availability by Goals, 2025



Overall, the number of indicators with no data poses significant challenge in several countries, with over 30 indicators lacking any data in Central African Republic, Djibouti, Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, Lesotho, Libya, Seychelles, Somalia, and South Sudan.

No of indicators under SDG 3,5,8,14 and 17 according to availability, 2025



Central Africa	East Africa	North Africa	Southern Africa	West Africa
Cameroon	Burundi	Algeria	Angola	Benin
Central African Republic	Comoros	Egypt	Botswana	Burkina Faso
Chad	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Libya	Eswatini	Cape Verde
Congo	Ethiopia	Mauritania	Lesotho	Côte d'Ivoire
Equatorial Guinea	Eritrea	Morocco	Malawi	Gambia
Gabon	Djibouti	Sudan	Mauritius	Ghana
Sao Tome and Principe	Kenya	Tunisia	Mozambique	Guinea
	Madagascar		Namibia	Guinea-Bissau
	Rwanda		South Africa	Liberia
	Seychelles		Zambia	Mali
	Somalia		Zimbabwe	Niger
	South Sudan			Nigeria
	Uganda			Senegal
	United Republic of Tanzania			Sierra Leone
				Togo

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